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EDITORIAL

REAGAN DRAWS THE LINE

President Reagan delivered a ferocious, distorted and inflammatory address on Central America to a joint session of Congress, and then forgot to add the punch line. His vision of the Soviet threat south of the border was as apocalyptic as any proposed in this new cold war: "The national security of all the Americas is at stake. . . . If we cannot defend ourselves there, we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere . . . and the safety of our homeland would be put at jeopardy." To meet this terminal menace the Administration will appoint a roving ambassador and seek a supplemental aid appropriation. The big bang ended in one small whimper.

Reagan's speech was full of false historical analogies, willful fabrications of fact and fatuous name-calling. But its most egregious error was the assumption that America's national security requires imperial control of Central America. Such a notion inevitably means support for tyrannical client regimes, which in turn generate rebellions whose leaders are forced to seek ideological and military aid outside the U.S. orbit. Thus, the predictions of global threat become self-fulfilling.

That is the lesson of Vietnam, and of Cuba and Nicaragua. Reagan acknowledges part of it: that American troops cannot be sent abroad to impose an American solution. He may come to understand another part: that military means cannot be employed to resolve what is essentially a political crisis.

But he has yet to see that it is his definition of "America's vital interests" that must be changed before the threat he envisions will dissolve. If those interests mean total control and widespread repression, then he—and we—have already lost. But if they involve even the possibility of freedom and independence for the people of "all the Americas," then real peace will be at hand.

TAKE BACK YOUR PAC $$
Wendy Cooper

T.M.I. LESSONS IGNORED
Robert Pollard

PEACE CORPS BRAINWASHED
Daniel Barry

RADWASTE & THE INDIANS
Fred C. Shapiro

TALES OF THE 'TIMES'
Jennifer Allen
Seymour Krim

LAST THINGS
Nell Irvin Painter

WHILE SOMEONE ELSE IS EATING

CARLA: 'IT'S VERY HARD TO SAY I'M POOR'

This is the first in a series of articles that will appear in The Nation *about how some people are being made to live in America today. The writers are all novelists or poets. They were asked to write about the human costs of President Reagan's policies.*

None of the writers were given "assignments"; they chose their own subjects. The idea was to free them from all constraints of journalism save one: that of grounding their work in reality. Our aim was to gather an uneven collection, each piece as unique as the voice and the sensibility of the artist who wrote it.

Some pieces will be edited for length. The articles will be published in their entirety by Doubleday/Anchor Press under the title While Someone Else Is Eating, *which is taken from W. H. Auden's lines:*

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they
understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a
window or just walking dully along

MAXINE KUMIN

In the converted attic of the old clapboard house where 39-year-old Carla Sanderson (not her real name) rents a second-floor apartment for one half of her $718 monthly take-home pay, her little boy keeps a white rat with boudoir-pink eyes in a cage. Its bedding of pine shavings is fresh, the water dish is clean, there are food pellets in the miniature bowl. The rat's name is Lester and he is tame enough to handle, a fact that 10-year-

(*Continued on Page 575*)

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LETTERS.

THE ROLE OF WRITERS

Princeton, N.J.

I was sorry to see that *The Nation* carried a misquotation attributed to me by *The New York Times* ["Pomp & Circumstances," March 26]. It was actually a distortion and a considerable abbreviation of remarks I had made during a two-hour panel sponsored by the German Book Fair at The New School in New York City.

Since the panelists' and the audience's sympathies were liberal—in some cases quite radical—there was little need to reiterate a position critical of Washington, especially so far as foreign affairs are concerned.

Among other things, I wanted us all to discuss the point that, in our culture, writers invariably surface as "activists" only in the adversary role, and usually in response to single issues. I certainly don't have any solutions, but I thought the dilemma might be worth discussing. How to effect genuine change in society without special training, education, experience? How to have the slightest impact in a context of career politicians and professionals? Writers naturally have opinions, moral sentiments, strong beliefs, etc., but most of us are amateurs in other fields and tend to be judged as such. Also, by the time an issue becomes public (or publicized), it may well be too late to do anything but protest.

Public forums are unfortunate in that they suggest to the participants an air of conversational informality in which points can be made, discussed, refuted, expanded upon and qualified. Journalists covering the discussions take down isolated remarks that seem to suggest dramatic disagreements, and these turn up in the next morning's paper, wrenched out of context. Because the panelists—Günter Grass, John Irving, Ted Solotaroff, an editor of *Die Zeit* and myself—agreed on so many general issues, smaller points were naturally emphasized. I drew a great deal of hostility from the audience simply by making the point, a neutral one, surely, that American writers have a tradition of writing about whatever they want—regional subjects, autobiographical experience, love, the West, etc.—and that we don't expect or require them to be political in the narrowest sense of the word. For better or worse, I said, we are free. I then asked the Germans if there is any serious German literature at the present time that isn't political in fairly explicit terms, and I was told no, there is not. That our two cultures are significantly different seemed to me a topic worth discussing as well, but it appeared to be an unpopular observation and was lost in the general enthusiasm that writers should be "activists."

(Activists of any kind?—one hardly dared ask, bringing up the specter, say, of Ezra Pound.)

Joyce Carol Oates

'TEMPORARY' REPRESSION

Washington

I am writing to compliment *The Nation* on the very fine article on Uruguay in the March 26 issue. In "The Littlest Totalitarian," Martin Andersen accurately portrays the repression that characterizes Uruguay.

Andersen alludes to the legitimization that the current U.S. Administration gives to the ruling Uruguayan military. He writes, "The State Department's country reports on human rights released in February said that violations have been on the decline since 1978. However . . . Uruguayans still live in fear." The State Department report also claims that "since 1978, no permanent disappearances have been documented." This distinction between temporary and permanent disappearances seems to indicate that the former are somehow acceptable to the Reagan Administration. The position of the United States can be very influential in a place like Uruguay, and under Reagan, this influence has been negative. Uruguay is budgeted to receive U.S. military assistance next year, for the first time since 1976.

On March 20, three Uruguayans were kidnapped by plainclothesmen near their home in Montevideo. The reasons for their disappearance are unknown and their detention has not been acknowledged by the Uruguayan government. One of the disappeared is a 91-year-old woman, Irene Corrales; the other two are her daughter and son-in-law, aged 69 and 70. Whether these disappearances are "temporary" or "permanent" is irrelevant. However, with distinctions like these already made, the Uruguayan military surely must feel it can do no wrong.

Virginia M. Bouvier
Associate, Washington Office on Latin America

THE SMITH GUIDELINES

Buffalo

"Slack Guidelines" [editorial, *The Nation*, March 26] is a perceptive comment on the adverse consequences for First Amendment rights posed by the guidelines governing F.B.I. "domestic security/terrorism investigations" issued by Attorney General William French Smith on March 7. *The Nation*'s editorial, however, failed to assess another, more troublesome provision of the Smith guidelines: the recision of a direct oversight role in such F.B.I. investigations by the attorney general.

Under the guidelines issued by Attorney General Edward Levi on March 4, 1976, the Department of Justice was required to review "at least annually" all F.B.I. "domestic security" investigations and to "determine in writing whether continued investigation is warranted." The Smith guidelines eliminate this written authorization requirement, making the attorney general's role merely discretionary. They stipulate: (1) that the attorney general "may, as he deems necessary, request the F.B.I. to prepare a report on the status of the investigation"; (2) that the F.B.I. director or a designated assistant director alone may authorize the initiation and continuance of "domestic security/terrorism" investigations; and (3) that the F.B.I.'s reporting requirements shall be limited to "notify[ing]" the Office of Intelligence Policy and Review, not the attorney general, of the decision to initiate such investigations and of the results of such investigations.

This deliberate avoidance of any written authorization requirement also contrasts with other provisions of the Smith guidelines governing "sensitive criminal" and "racketeering enterprise" investigations. For example, the Smith guidelines stipulate that a "racketeering enterprise" investigation can be initiated only "upon written recommendation" by the F.B.I. director "setting forth the facts and circumstances reasonably indicating the existence of a racketeering enterprise whose activities involve violence, extortion, narcotics, or systematic public corruption." If a "racketeering enterprise" does not involve "violence, extortion, narcotics, or systematic public corruption," an investigation can be initiated only if authorized by the F.B.I. director "upon his written determination, concurred in by the Attorney General, that such investigation is warranted by exceptional circumstances."

The contrast between Attorney General Smith's authorization procedures for "racketeering enterprise" and for "domestic security/terrorism" investigations reveals much about the Reagan Administration's priorities and politics. On the one hand, Smith decided not to review F.B.I. "domestic security/terrorism" investigations to ascertain whether they complied with the permissive standards of his guidelines and did not violate any Federal statutes or the Constitution. On the other hand, a "better crooks than political activists" standard is suggestive of the bankruptcy of cold war conservatism, rhetoric about the need to insure the "rule of law," curtail administrative discretion and "get the government off our backs" notwithstanding.

Athan G. Theoharis

QUERIES ON NATIONAL WRITERS UNION

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EDITORIALS.

Springtime for Hitler

Which "hot face from Europe" sells the most newsmagazines? *Time*, which coined the category in its cover headline for last week's issue, is betting on the film star Nastassia Kinski. *Newsweek*, in a rather more nostalgic mood, ran with Kinski's fellow German, the late dictator Adolf Hitler. The comparison, while invidious, is somehow germane. For the promotion of both hot faces represents media marketing rather than news journalism. More important than what is true (or even newsworthy) is what sells more copies: Hitler's Holocaust or Nastassia Kinski's jiggle?

Hot Face Hitler may or may not have written the sixty volumes of diaries and the draft of a third volume of his best seller, *Mein Kampf*, from which *Newsweek* published excerpts. We've been waiting thirty-eight years for word from Hitler's grave; *Newsweek* might have waited one more week and made sure the voice was genuine. But the question of authorship is not nearly so interesting as the matter of media theatricality which surrounds it, or indeed, as the hilarious response of various experts and historians to the media event.

The egg-on-the-face award of the year (although it's only April as this is being written) must go to British historian

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Hugh Trevor-Roper for authenticating the documents in the first place, and then backtracking before his employer—Rupert Murdoch's *Sunday Times* of London—could print its dearly-bought first installment. Trevor-Roper is a living monument to British academic self-promotion and willful gullibility. He flew to Switzerland to riffle through the papers in the darkened vault of a Zurich bank and to chat with the West German journalist who supposedly unearthed the volumes in East Germany. Trevor-Roper bought the tall tale and believed the text, and *The Sunday Times* (on whose board of governors T.-R. sits) bought the story, for a sum reputedly in the low seven figures.

Later, after the first excerpts had been printed in *Stern* and almost every expert in the history of the period had scoffed at the papers' authenticity, T.-R. recanted and *The Sunday Times* put its piece on indefinite hold. *Newsweek*, however, decided to make the best of a good job of fabrication and bannered the documents on its cover (and trumpeted them in its television ads), while expressing skepticism in its inside pages.

Meanwhile, the various entrepreneurs of Holocaustiana began weighing in with their opinions. Some West German academicians who have a healthy trade going in historical analyses of the Hitler era told *The New York Times* they thought the papers were the creation of their competitors in the East, a Potsdam "counterfeit workshop" specializing in phony mementos designed to attract Western currency to the hard-pressed Communist regime. But an American expert said he thought "the East has better ways of earning hard currency." It began to sound like a dispute among rival cloak-and-suiters.

Finally, the ideologues entered the fray. *The New York Times* wondered, in a headline, whether the whole thing might be "pro-Soviet propaganda," and it began looking for textual clues. The question of posthumous attribution of authorship has been problematic through the ages. G.K. Chesterton once remarked that if "Francis Bacon did *not* write Shakespeare's plays, he missed the opportunity of a lifetime." The K.G.B. would have been well advised to take time off from plotting against popes and pilfering the secrets of Gallic technology to scribble off the diaries of a dead man who can tell no tales. Whoever the diarist was, he or she seemed to admire Neville Chamberlain and Stalin and to be critical of many of the Reich's lieutenants, as well as concerned about the effects of certain Nazi policies. The Hitler of the hidden papers did not match the Hitler of historical mythology as manufactured by T.-R. and others.

In fact, whoever the diarist Hitler turns out to be, in an odd way he or she makes more sense than the mythic monster. There has always been something phony in the figure created by eminent historians and perpetuated in the popular imagination by the constant barrage of Hitler data—the books, movies, television series, magazine articles and personal recollections that lend a certain "fascist chic" to discussions of the war period. The historical Hitler has given way to a sensationalized sadomasochistic icon which sells, in its own way, as well as the newest trendy movie star.

One *Stern* reporter was quoted in *Newsweek* as saying the Hitler of the diaries was a dull and banal character; his papers were "all without depth, a very disappointing diary of a monster." That is too bad for fiction, but historical characters are often shallow and boring, and only their actions are truly complex and evil. Writers and professors after the fact find it hard to reconcile personal mediocrity and political evil genius, and they cannot refrain from demonizing their subjects. Shakespeare made the boring Richard III into a Gothic gargoyle. T.-R. and others did the same for Hitler. Too bad for them that history makes more subtle distinctions.

Bigger Than Us

In our issue of April 11, 1981, we published "The C.I.A. and the White Paper on El Salvador," by Ralph McGehee. McGehee, a former employee of the Central Intelligence Agency, had submitted his article for prepublication review before sending it to us, and agency censors had deleted a number of words and several sentences on the ground that they revealed information that "could reasonably be expected to result in at least identifiable harm" to U.S. national security. The article appeared with the deletions indicated by brackets.

Naturally, we protested the censorship. McGehee and *The Nation* jointly filed suit against the agency and its director, William Casey. We contended that the deleted information had been improperly classified and that prepublication review based on the vague Federal standards for declassification of information was in violation of the First Amendment. A Federal District Court disagreed with us, and we appealed. On April 20, the government got around to answering our appeal. In its brief, the Justice Department argues that the agency has no obligation to prove that the release of particular words or phrases it has censored would damage the national security; it need only *assert* that this is the case, so long as it has followed "proper" classification procedures.

All of this might seem fairly parochial were it not for the President's directive of March 11, which requires that all present and former employees of the entire national security establishment—not just the C.I.A.—submit speeches, articles, manuscripts, etc. for prepublication review. Our case, which will be argued before the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia on May 18, suddenly acquired an importance that transcends journalism.

Literacy Race

The two most successful literacy campaigns in the Third World have been waged by revolutionary regimes in Cuba, which reduced illiteracy from more than 20 percent to less than 5 percent in 1961, and in Nicaragua, which brought its rate from about 50 percent to less than 14 percent in 1980. Three years ago, bent on proving that capitalism can be just as effective in

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reaching illiterates, Venezuelan businessmen started their own program, aimed at the 1.2 million adults in the country who cannot read or write.

The success of the Cuban and Nicaraguan campaigns has been confirmed by UNESCO, itself the sponsor of similar efforts in Algeria, Mali, Tanzania, Madagascar, Nigeria, Ecuador and Syria, all of which had disappointing results. But the Venezuelan businessmen excluded the political activism that was integral to the Cuban and Nicaraguan campaigns, particularly the mass mobilizations of urban volunteers to teach the rural poor and the politically charged vocabulary of the primers. The Venezuelan program, known as Acude (Cultural Association for Development), is intended to show, as President Luis Herrera Campíns put it, that "democracy" can perform as well as "totalitarianism."

Acude is funded by private firms, "applying tools that belong to the commercial world," according to management consultant Miguel Hausmann, who was quoted recently in *The New York Times*. The main tool is intensive radio and television advertising. The teaching materials—primer, roll-up blackboard, chalk, portable record player and thirty-one records—are sold as a kit that costs about $12. Five students are expected to share each kit. And the vocabulary of the primers is carefully nonrevolutionary. " 'F' in our program is for 'familia,' not 'fusil' [rifle]," reports businessman Nicomedes Zuloaga.

The government claims that Acude has brought literacy to 270,000 Venezuelans, far fewer than originally hoped. This compares with 707,212 new literates in nine months in Cuba's Great Campaign, and 406,056 in six months in Nicaragua. The slower progress of the Venezuelan program may be due in part to the insipid vocabulary in the primers. According to Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, and other literacy experts, the use of emotionally charged words like "hunger" and "land" stimulates enthusiasm to learn. Of course, selling the kits limits the program to those who are sufficiently motivated by the advertisements to buy it, and the isolation of learning groups deprives them of the fervor of the Cuban and Nicaraguan literacy "brigades."

But there is a more fundamental problem with the sales pitch. Acude deliberately divorces literacy from what Freire calls "consciousness"—an understanding of one's power to change the world. The great success of the Cuban and Nicaraguan programs derives from the fact that they encourage students to feel they can make a difference and are involved in a larger social transformation. Raising political consciousness and acquiring literacy are part of the same process. In Venezuela, there is no reason for pupils to believe that literacy will increase their power to shape events. Rather, the Venezuelan businessmen seem to be trying to train people to be better recipients of messages, whether from employers, politicians or commercial advertisers. And a lot of Venezuelan illiterates are not buying it.

GEOFFREY FOX

Geoffrey Fox is a sociologist and writer specializing in Latin America.

Pledging Union

A long and bitter union organizing drive at Columbia University culminates this week when some 1,100 clerical workers decide whether to join District 65/United Automobile Workers. The campaign has implications for more than one campus work force: clerical workers are trying to organize at Harvard, Cornell and Yale, and District 65 members at Boston University are about to enter contract negotiations. Nationwide, the movement to organize campus clerical workers is making impressive gains.

Clerical workers make up a growing proportion of the labor force, but they have only recently begun to join labor unions in large numbers. In the 1970s, several unions targeted universities for clerical organizing drives, and in the last decade clerical workers on several campuses have organized with District 65, including Columbia affiliates Barnard College, Teachers College and Union Theological Seminary.

The U.A.W., which has a history of white-collar organizing, has organized several public universities in Michigan through its Technical Office and Professional Workers (TOP) Division. In 1979, District 65 affiliated with the U.A.W., and the two unions in combination are pursuing campaigns at several universities. The Service Employees International Union, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, the American Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees are all engaged in similar efforts.

Universities like to portray themselves as benevolent, nonprofit institutions with an "educational mission," and they usually plead poverty when workers make salary and benefit demands. "Columbia wants us to feel privileged for working here," says Columbia secretary Sally Otos. But clerical workers are not overcome with gratitude, and say, in the words of one District 65 slogan, "We can't eat prestige." Moreover, universities don't talk about their often huge assets when they are asking their employees to accept lower wages. Columbia's real estate holdings, for example, are the third largest of any institution in New York City, and include a chunk of Wall Street as well as the land under Rockefeller Center. It is currently in the midst of a $400 million capital fund drive. Yet this year it plans to offer some clerical workers no wage increase at all, and the greatest increase will be only 6 percent.

The file clerks, secretaries, receptionists and word-processor operators at Columbia know the university could not run without them. "They'd rather see more than a third of us quit each year than give us decent incentives to stay," says secretary Barbara Hlavin. "But turnover that high hurts students and faculty as well as us."

RACHEL KRANZ

Rachel Kranz is a secretary at Columbia University and a member of the District 65/U.A.W. organizing committee at Columbia.

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SOVIETICUS.

STEPHEN F. COHEN

Survivors of Nazi concentration camps occupy a special place in our political consciousness and popular culture, as dramatized last month when more than 14,000 Jewish survivors and their families met in Washington to inaugurate an official Holocaust museum.

Meanwhile, survivors of the concentration camps of Stalin's Gulag, in which a virtual Soviet holocaust was carried out between 1929 and 1953, continue to live in almost total obscurity. If they gathered with their families in Moscow to dedicate an official memorial to that holocaust—Nikita Khrushchev proposed such a monument in 1961—the number might be close to 15 million.

By drawing attention to the largely unknown story of the Gulag survivors, I do not wish to equate Nazism and Stalinism, which were different in important ways. Indeed, the Soviet government was both savior and culprit in these events. Whatever its other acts, the Soviet Union saved more European Jews from Nazism than any other country, first by providing sanctuary for hundreds of thousands of Jews fleeing eastward after the German invasion of Poland, in 1939, and then by destroying the Nazi war machine and liberating the death camps in Eastern Europe.

After Stalin's death in 1953, the Soviet government slowly began to free its own concentration camp inmates. The process culminated in a mass liberation of 7 million or more political prisoners after Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in February 1956. By summer, homeward-bound survivors, some still skeletonlike and wearing bits of prison garb, had become a familiar sight across the country.

They were survivors in the fullest sense. Unlike the Nazi death camps, the Gulag's first purpose was forced labor; but harsh working conditions and meager rations were often murderous, and the human toll tragic. According to a conservative estimate, at least 12 million prisoners died in the Gulag between 1936 and 1950.

To its credit, the Soviet government helped millions of Gulag survivors return to society in the 1950s, providing them with medical care, living quarters, jobs and pensions. While the great majority slipped back into the anonymity of Soviet society, many achieved professional success, and some even played important political roles under Khrushchev.

But many Soviet returnees had the same personal problems as survivors of the Nazi camps. A great number had lost everything during their Gulag years—families, careers and health. Many were psychologically numbed or otherwise impaired. Some lived in constant anxiety, tormented by nightmares and everyday reminders of the Gulag. Some started new families, but refused to discuss the past with them. Often, their children developed attitudes that were characteristic of children of Nazi camp survivors.

The same moral and political questions that Jews asked also obsessed many Soviet survivors: Who had survived, who had not, and why? Who had been responsible for their suffering, and why had no one helped them?

These survivors, however, returned to their own society, where millions of citizens had been direct accomplices in Stalin's terror or its circumstantial beneficiaries. The poet Anna Akhmatova remarked of those people: "Now they are trembling for their names, positions, apartments, dachas. The whole calculation was that no one would return." She added, "Two Russias are eyeball to eyeball—those who were imprisoned and those who put them there."

That conflict became an important aspect of Soviet politics during Khrushchev's de-Stalinization from 1956 to 1964. It surfaced in formal charges made by survivors against high-ranking "hangmen, torturers and informers," in dramatic confrontations between victims and victimizers, and even in Khrushchev's speeches against his opponents in the leadership. The "camp theme" crept persistently into the officially censored press, along with Nuremberg-like questions of criminal responsibility and punishment.

The Soviet government briefly and reluctantly pursued these Nuremberg issues, but the effort did not go beyond the trial and execution of perhaps twenty-five of Stalin's top policemen and the dismissal of a few thousand officials in the mid-1950s. Too many people, including Soviet leaders, were involved. (Would the Bonn government have gone further on its own?) Moreover, an almost total silence about these issues was imposed on the Soviet press following the official rehabilitation of the Stalinist past, which began with Khrushchev's overthrow and continues today.

After Khrushchev's fall, however, some Soviet survivors began to insist more loudly, like Holocaust survivors, on the need for "memory" about Stalinist crimes. A remarkable number of Gulag victims and their children became leading dissidents in the late 1960s, including Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Lev Kopelev, Roy Medvedev and Elena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov's wife. Equally important, a powerful Gulag literature has since emerged in *samizdat* and in books published abroad—memoirs, fiction and history written by survivors such as Evgenia Ginzburg, Varlam Shalamov and Solzhenitsyn. Its similarities to Holocaust literature are unmistakable.

We haven't heard the last of these themes from inside the Soviet Union. Intellectuals are still bitterly divided over the lesson to be learned from the Gulag holocaust: for Solzhenitsyn, it is the need to abolish the Soviet socialist system; for Medvedev, the need for socialist reform. All agree, however, that "memory" of what happened is "a duty to those who died, to those who survived . . . to those who will come after us." That alone guarantees the continuation of uncensored historical writing and political dissent.

Nor are official circles really deaf to such themes. Throughout society, and even officialdom itself, many Gulag victims and their children remain a potential constituency for another combined wave of anti-Stalinist revelations and reform. Imagine how those people, with their ingrained Soviet habit of reading between the lines, reacted this February when a leading Soviet newspaper published a Chinese writer's "tragic" story about survivors of Mao's "evil" Cultural Revolution. The editorial introduction was entitled "So That This Does Not Happen Again."

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ARTICLES.

THREE CANDIDATES SPEAK

Take Back Your Dirty PAC Money

WENDY COOPER

In a burst of competitive high-mindedness, three of the six declared candidates for the Democratic Party's Presidential nomination recently vowed that they would accept no campaign contributions from political action committees. The three vying for the political high ground are Florida Governor Reubin Askew, Walter Mondale and Colorado Senator Gary Hart. Even those Democratic hopefuls who haven't rejected the PACs' "dirty money" have paid lip service to the growing clamor for reforms in campaign financing. South Carolina Senator Ernest Hollings has expressed some concern about ballooning PAC campaign contributions. Senator Alan Cranston of California says he has always favored public financing of campaigns for all Federal offices (rather than just for the Presidency, as the law now stands), even if that would mean the elimination of PACs. Senator John Glenn remains undecided on what, if any, reforms are needed, but a spokesman said he has the matter under review.

PACs have been around at least since World War II, when the C.I.O. founded its prototypical Committee on Political Education, but their proliferation began after 1974 amendments to the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act formalized their use for political purposes. Since then, they have enjoyed a phenomenal growth. During the 1981-82 election cycle, some 2,500 PACs funneled $85 million to $90 million to Congressional candidates. Corporate and trade association PACs contributed nearly $50 million to their chosen candidates. Labor has also been munificent, though it lacks the resources of business. Three hundred and fifty labor PACs contributed $20 million to Congressional candidates. Nowadays, just about every interest group, from environmentalists to the gun lobby, has a PAC.

PACs have been accused of unduly influencing the voting behavior of the members of Congress they finance, and they have been blamed for the rapidly escalating costs of running for public office. In 1974 the average cost of campaigning for the House was $50,000; in 1980 it was $150,000; and last year campaign bills of $500,000 were not uncommon.

All the candidates who rejected PAC money deplored these deleterious effects. Mondale said his renunciation was intended "to dramatize the need for change." He vowed not only to "slap controls on PACs" but also to "clamp ceilings on campaign spending, close independent committee loopholes and finance Congressional campaigns publicly." Hart has declared that a President "who owes his election to narrow interests risks an Administration that is owned by them." According to his press secretary, he is concerned less with the possibility that individual candidates can be bought than with the overall impact that large infusions of special-interest money has on the political process. He will introduce a bill that would limit the amounts PACs can contribute to each candidate, provide for partial public financing of House and Senate campaigns and restrict the amounts Congressional candidates may spend. Askew, who claims to have been the first to reject PAC funds—though his formal announcement came on February 9, while Mondale's and Hart's came on February 8—says he will eventually propose reforms in Federal election laws; so far he has come up with no specific proposals.

Actually, PACs have had relatively little impact on Presidential races. In the 1980 election, according to the Federal Election Commission, less than 3 percent of the $60.2 million total PAC contribution went to Presidential candidates. The figures are even more striking when the amounts received by individual candidates are scrutinized. For example, former California Governor Jerry Brown received only $37,500 from PACs for his primary campaign, compared with $1.7 million in contributions from individuals. Candidate Ronald Reagan took $285,000 in PAC money—compared with $13.8 million in individual contributions.

A major reason for the discrepancy between PAC largesse to Congressional candidates and to Presidential hopefuls lies in the Federal election law itself. It states that if an entrant in a Presidential primary accepts public funding under the so-called matching program, in which individual contri-

DRAWINGS BY KIMBERLY BULCKEN

Wendy Cooper contributes frequently to The Nation.

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butions of up to $250 are matched dollar-for-dollar by Federal money, he must agree to a "qualified campaign spending limit" of $10 million, plus an inflation increment using 1974 as the base year. The candidate may also accept up to $5,000 in contributions from each PAC, but these funds will not be matched by public funds. In the general election, a Presidential candidate who accepts matching funds may not accept either individual or PAC contributions for his campaign. (The candidate may, however, accept PAC money and individual contributions of up to $1,000 for the legal and accounting costs of complying with the law.) Thus the power of PAC money is felt mainly at the Congressional level, and that is where most legislative reform efforts are directed. But partial public funding of Presidential campaigns hasn't closed all the loopholes.

Those "independent committees" that Mondale mentioned are a case in point. These groups, like the National Conservative Political Action Committee, intervene in Presidential elections but do not give money directly to candidates. In 1976, the Supreme Court ruled that campaign contributions are protected by the First Amendment and that PACs may finance campaign propaganda for or against a given candidate provided there is no direct communication or liaison between them. What is more, the Court held, there are no limits on the amount a PAC may spend, although contributions greater than $250 must be reported to the F.E.C.

Common Cause, a citizens' lobbying group, challenged the unlimited independent-expenditures concept in 1980, arguing that the Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act allows each PAC to spend no more than $1,000 in behalf of each federally funded candidate. When the case came before the Supreme Court, the vote was split 4 to 4, and the F.E.C. has said it will follow the issue on a case-by-case basis. As an F.E.C. source pointed out, "A candidate shouldn't know about these expenditures [on his behalf], but they amount to a lot of money." Independent committees, then, can have an indirect influence on a candidate, since he will be aware of their support.

Voters may now watch what Hart, Askew, Mondale and any other PAC renouncers do in light of what they have said. Until recently, Mondale had his own PAC, the Committee for the Future of America, which raised more than $2 million last year to pay for his appearances in behalf of other Democratic candidates. According to Mondale's staff, not a penny of the $2 million his committee raised last year has been used for his Presidential campaign. Hart has accepted PAC money in his senatorial campaigns, but as his press secretary points out, until there is public funding for Congressional races, candidates who refuse PAC money are likely to be heavily outspent by their opponents—which is why Hart now calls for public financing of these races.

In short, though Hart, Mondale and Askew have political motives for eschewing PAC money, they have taken a public stand and raised the issue. They have made the gesture; now they must follow through and come up with legislative remedies for the current PAC epidemic. □

RUSSIA LOOKS WEST

The Myth of 'Hostage Europe'

MATTHEW A. EVANGELISTA

Since World War II, American leaders have interpreted Soviet military policy toward Europe in one of two ways. Either it is offensive and needs to be "deterred" by the United States, or it is offensive *in order* to deter the United States. The first interpretation I will call the Churchillian view since it was expressed most often and most eloquently by Winston Churchill when the United States had a monopoly on the atomic bomb. For example: "It is indeed a melancholy thought that nothing preserves Europe from an overwhelming military attack except the devastating resources of the United States in this awful weapon." The Churchillian theory posits an implacably hostile Soviet Union that can be contained only by threat of nuclear annihilation. That is the prevailing view of the Reagan Administration.

The second view may be dubbed "Hostage Europe." It was first put forth by some American Sovietologists in the 1950s. They agreed that the Soviet Union's military policy was "offensively oriented," but they believed that its ultimate goal was defensive—to thwart the aggressive designs of Western imperialists. With regard to Europe, American proponents of that view argued that the Russians retained the capability of rapidly invading the Continent as a way of deterring a U.S. nuclear attack on their own country. Thus Western Europe was held hostage.*

After the Soviet Union acquired the bomb in 1949, it built missiles that could reach Europe, and the Hostage Europeanists argued that their theory still held—the missiles were a stopgap measure, making Europe a nuclear hostage until the Soviet Union had ICBMs capable of striking the United States. Yet after the Russians acquired long-range missiles, they built the SS-20 and the Backfire bomber and targeted them on "unarmed" Western Europe. The Russians were obviously not playing by the rules of the Hostage Europe theory. Its proponents duly recanted, and the Churchillian view won out.

Do these interpretations have a grounding in reality?

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*Hostage Europe was never a Soviet strategic view. It first appeared authoritatively in this country as a parody of a Soviet parody of U.S. policy. In his 1959 book, *War and the Soviet Union*, the noted RAND Corporation Sovietologist Herbert S. Dinerstein described a hypothetical war between the United States and the Soviet Union, citing as his source the famous Soviet historian Eugene Tarle. But Tarle's actual words, as quoted in *The New York Times*, April 8, 1947, show that he was describing "comment *from American military circles* . . . the polemic going on in the United States." [Emphasis added.]

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History shows they do not. Let us first examine the Churchillian view. At the end of World War II not only Churchill but most Western leaders saw "an overwhelming military attack" by the Red Army as a major threat to Western Europe, one that justified a buildup of U.S. nuclear weapons as a deterrent as well as the formation of an anti-Soviet alliance, NATO. But according to now available evidence, the Red Army was incapable of launching such an attack. In 1946, the Central Intelligence Agency intercepted a Soviet communication from the commander of the armed forces, Marshal Georgi Zhukov, to Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, in which Zhukov reported that his troops were incapable of fighting. Recently declassified U.S. intelligence documents suggest why.

In the first place, the Red Army was demobilized in stages, starting the day after the war in Europe ended. The pace was quick, contrary to most U.S. accounts, but not quick enough for some of the conscripts. Soviet sources describe problems of morale and discipline and an epidemic of desertions.

Second, the Soviet troops remaining in Germany and Eastern Europe had little time to train for an invasion of the West. Many were assigned to the reparations program and spent all their time dismantling factories and plants in Germany and shipping the machinery to the Soviet Union. Many other Soviet soldiers in Germany and Eastern Europe in the early postwar years had military occupation duties, which meant carrying out Soviet policies of political control and repression. Soviet forces were also engaged in fighting armed antigovernment groups still active in the Ukraine and in the Baltic republics well into the 1950s.

Third, Soviet troops played a major role in the postwar reconstruction of their homeland, which had been devastated by the German invasion. Seventy thousand villages and 1,700 towns had to be rebuilt. Millions of land mines and bombs left by the retreating German Army had to be cleared away. This work was the main task of many Soviet soldiers during the early postwar years. Others worked on farms or in factories. Preparation for a blitzkrieg invasion of Western Europe was clearly not a priority.

Fourth, the Red Army simply did not have the capability to execute the rapid invasion feared by many in the West. As late as 1950, half of its transportation consisted of horse-drawn vehicles. Most roads, railways and bridges in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were destroyed or seriously damaged during the war, according to U.S. intelligence, and repairs proceeded slowly. The Russians dismantled much of the railway system in East Germany as part of their reparations program.

Moreover, Soviet forces were poorly equipped; they had World War II-vintage weaponry and were severely deficient in many areas of modern military technology, such as radar and jet engines. The balance of conventional forces in Europe during the early postwar years did not favor the Russians. Although common wisdom held that the thirty Soviet divisions on occupation duty in Eastern Europe were virtually unopposed and that the West was vastly outnumbered, it was not the case. The West did have fewer

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divisions in Europe than the Russians, but each of its divisions had three times as many soldiers as a Soviet division. The balance in numbers of soldiers was about even then, and it still is today.

If Western Europeans had really feared a Soviet invasion in the late 1940s, they should have reinforced their troops in Europe. They certainly had plenty to spare for other purposes—such as colonialism. France, for example, had 100,000 troops fighting in Indochina in the late 1940s and another 100,000 in North Africa. Some 60,000 Dutch troops were stationed in Indonesia, while Belgium had 17,000 in the Congo. Instead of strengthening their conventional forces on the Continent, the Europeans relied on NATO and the U.S. "nuclear umbrella."

It was not the threat of U.S. nuclear retaliation that determined the size of Soviet conventional forces in Europe. Soviet occupation forces were not intended to offset the U.S. atomic bomb but to secure Eastern Europe as a buffer zone. In fact, as many contemporary observers remarked, *the bomb made the buffer zone irrelevant.*

The Hostage Europe theory does not explain the purpose of the large Soviet standing army in Europe, and it does no better with Soviet nuclear policy. Hostage Europeanists argue that once the Russians acquired the bomb, they viewed Europe as a nuclear hostage. The threat of an attack on it would serve to deter an American strike on Russia. It was presumed that Soviet nuclear bombers were targeted on European cities. Thus Paris was held hostage to protect Leningrad, London to protect Moscow and so forth.

This argument is unconvincing for a number of reasons. For one thing, despite the Soviet atomic test in 1949, the Soviet armed forces did not have nuclear weapons until 1954, after Stalin's death. Stalin would not let his generals even discuss the possible role of nuclear weapons in warfare, let alone deploy them. Soviet Tu-4 bombers (similar to U.S. B-29s) carried conventional bombs, and the thousand or so bombers deployed were most likely targeted on U.S. air bases in Britain and Western Europe and on other military facilities, which were the closest nuclear threats to the Soviet Union. In July 1948, during the Berlin blockade, the United States stationed "atomic capable" B-29 bombers at bases in England and Germany. By the end of the 1950s, there were some 1,400 B-47 jet bombers with nuclear weapons assigned to bases in Europe, North Africa and Okinawa, encircling the Soviet Union. The first Soviet bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons, the Tu-16s, which became available in 1954, were certainly targeted on these forward-based U.S. strategic nuclear systems.

When Soviet medium-range ballistic missiles first appeared in the late 1950s, they replaced the less reliable bombers in targeting U.S. forward bases—not cities. The SS-4 and SS-5 missiles were not an "interim solution" until ICBMs were developed. *They were deployed as a response* to the nuclear threat posed by U.S. and NATO aircraft stationed in Europe. The Hostage Europe theory that the SS-4s and SS-5s were aimed at Europe as a temporary expedient until ICBMs capable of striking the United States could be developed is wrong. Even after the Russians had acquired the capability of hitting the North American continent, they continued to target new weapons on U.S. bases in Europe. They took the threat of a U.S. attack from Europe so seriously that they diverted a number of variable-range ICBMs—SS-11s—from intercontinental targets to European ones.

From the viewpoint of Soviet military planners, the nuclear threat from Europe increased in the 1960s. Britain and France deployed their "independent deterrents," and the United States expanded its force of land-based aircraft, submarine-based missiles and nuclear-capable aircraft on carriers. Yet when Soviet leaders demanded that these forward-based systems be placed on the agenda of arms control negotiations, the West refused. Faced by what it regarded as U.S. intransigence, the Soviet Union began deploying its newest missile—the SS-20—in 1977, as a replacement for the old and vulnerable SS-4s and SS-5s. The Hostage Europe theory could not explain the deployment, so the Reagan and Carter Administrations chose to view it from the perspective of Winston Churchill—as evidence of aggressive Soviet intentions. It makes more sense to see it as a reaction to U.S. military and arms control policies.

That is not to justify the emplacement of the SS-20s or to suggest that other factors, such as bureaucratic and technological inertia, did not contribute to their deployment. The Russians do not "need" the SS-20s. At current levels of nuclear overkill, more missiles do not mean more security. Europeans—East and West—are indeed held hostage, but the threat is of a superpower nuclear war taking place in their "theater." Europeans will only be free when their continent is free of nuclear weapons and the increasing militarization of East-West relations is reversed. □

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T.M.I. LESSONS IGNORED

At N.R.C. It's Safety Last

ROBERT POLLARD

Wheeler Lake winds along the northern plain of Alabama, a slither of water that was the Tennessee River until the Tennessee Valley Authority built the dams that changed the river and the region alike. On the lake's southern shore, near Decatur, stands a more modern emblem of the T.V.A.: the Brown's Ferry nuclear power plant. On a lazy March afternoon in 1975, a workman holding a lighted candle while checking for air leaks in the plant's electrical cable room started a fire. The power and safety systems connected by the cables were promptly disabled, and the nuclear reactor, running at full tilt, had to be shut down. The fire raged for hours, destroying electrical systems and confusing plant operators. A lone water pump that kept the reactor cool prevented a disaster.

Four years later and 700 miles away, in another tranquil river valley, similar failures of technology and training triggered a near meltdown at the Three Mile Island Unit 2 nuclear reactor near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Maintenance oversights, stuck valves, a poorly designed control panel and faulty safety systems caused the worst accident in the history of the nuclear power industry.

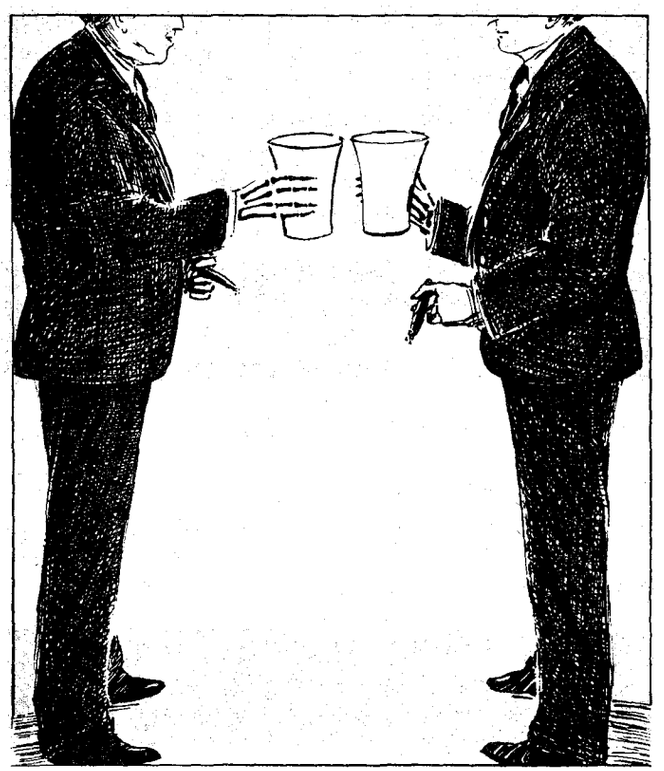
The reactor at Three Mile Island came within thirty to sixty minutes of a total meltdown, replacing the Brown's Ferry fire as the industry's most serious "nuclear event." Yet according to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's calculations, neither accident should have been possible. The Alabama fire attracted little notice and was soon forgotten, but the accident at T.M.I. shook the industry. Several investigations were initiated to determine its causes and to evaluate the performance of the N.R.C.

Though their findings differed in many particulars, the various probes—including several in Congress, two internal N.R.C. inquiries and the Presidential commission headed by John Kemeny, then president of Dartmouth College—were unanimously scathing in their criticisms of the nation's nuclear chaperone. "To prevent nuclear accidents as serious as Three Mile Island," said the Kemeny Commission's report, "fundamental changes will be necessary in [the N.R.C.'s] organization, procedures, and practices—and above all else—attitudes." The Special Inquiry Group led by Washington attorney Mitchell Rogovin found that the N.R.C. "is not focused, organized, or managed to meet today's needs." And the General Accounting Office, in its 1980 review of the commission, concluded that its "regulatory performance can be characterized best as slow, indecisive, and cautious—in a word, complacent." Indeed, it appeared that if the N.R.C. didn't clean up its act, its very existence—and the future of nuclear power itself—would be in jeopardy.

Four years later, it is clear that the commission's act has changed very little. The lessons of T.M.I. have been ignored, and although the problems of nuclear safety have become increasingly apparent, the N.R.C. has responded with indifference and delay. Worse, the White House fully supports the agency's inaction.

"We all know the political winds have shifted," N.R.C. Commissioner Victor Gilinsky told an industry audience last May. "The N.R.C. staff certainly senses a different mood: some of the very same senior N.R.C. officials who were outdoing each other three years ago in proposing new safety requirements are now competing to eliminate such requirements." Former N.R.C. Commissioner Peter Bradford is more blunt: "The Reagan Administration is the first in my knowledge to put political patronage into nuclear safety. There are purely political reasons for much of what is going on."

The T.M.I. Action Plan was supposed to contain the commission's comprehensive, long-term recommendations for improving reactor safety. With Roger Mattson, now a top N.R.C. expert on reactors, at its helm, a working group convened in late November 1979, and after seven months and four drafts the plan was completed and approved by all five commissioners. The document, which is nearly 600 pages long and contains 347 recommendations, seems to deal with every conceivable weakness in reactor safety. But it was undermined by the kind of enforcement laxity in re-



Robert Pollard is a nuclear safety engineer at the Union of Concerned Scientists. Additional research was provided by John Tirman.

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sponse to industry pressure that has characterized nuclear regulation for three decades.

While the plan was still in embryo, three industry lobbies acted to influence the N.R.C. working group. The most determined of the interveners was the Atomic Industrial Forum, which formed a task force to meet regularly with Mattson and his group. By late February, the A.I.F. had prepared a critique of the working group's fifty-one most important recommendations for reform and an estimate of the cost to industry of implementing the plan. Its efforts were not wasted: in the final draft of the Action Plan, thirty-six of those top-priority items had been modified or their implementation postponed. For example, in response to an industry request, the N.R.C. toned down the strict qualifications for plant operators proposed in earlier drafts.

The Action Plan committee heard no testimony from consumer groups. Indeed, no public comment of any kind was sought until July 1980—some two months after the Action Plan was completed. And instead of publishing the plan as a regulation—or "substantive rule"—the N.R.C. decided to issue it as a "general statement of policy," and decreed that the public could not challenge its sufficiency even though industry groups had been permitted to question the necessity of its requirements. Two commissioners dissented from that decision. Gilinsky called it a "manifestly unfair and unwise policy," and Bradford said that "the action embodies precisely the complacency that the Kemeny Commission, among others, suggested as a strong contributing factor to the accident at Three Mile Island."

In September 1980, more than seventeen months after the T.M.I. accident—and after the public comment period had passed—the agency *invited* licensees to petition for relief from the technical changes and the implementation schedules outlined in the plan. The utilities wasted no time seizing this opportunity: licensees made 202 requests for delays or "technical deviations" on the twenty-four items slated for implementation between July and December 1981. The commission has been equally dilatory. Of the 347 items in the Action Plan, more than 40 percent are still being "studied" or "developed" or are receiving no attention at all.

But putting important issues on the back burner is an N.R.C. tradition. A longstanding practice in hearings on license applications for new plants is to label any pervasive safety flaw—one that is found in more than just the plant under review—"generic." As the Kemeny Commission noted, "Once an issue is labeled 'generic,' the individual plant being licensed is not responsible for resolving the issue prior to licensing. That, in itself, would be acceptable, if there were a strict procedure within NRC to assure the timely resolution of generic problems. . . . However, the evidence indicates that labeling the problem 'generic' may provide a convenient way of postponing decision on a difficult question."

The N.R.C.—and the Atomic Energy Commission before it—has always thought that a partial meltdown, or "degraded core," such as occurred at T.M.I., would be an "incredible event." Therefore, the commission has not required plants to have equipment that could respond to a meltdown emergency. That was true at Three Mile Island, and it was also true at the Enrico Fermi II reactor near Detroit, where a partial meltdown occurred in 1966. The hazard is enormous: the radioactive material released from an overheated reactor core affects safety systems in unpredictable ways. But the commission continues to believe that the likelihood of such events is too remote to justify forcing utilities to take the necessary safety measures.

Both the Kemeny Commission's and the Rogovin group's reports spotlighted the problem of inadequately trained operators. They called for additional training and for the stationing of a nuclear engineer in the control room at all times, which would insure that someone with scientific background would be on hand to deal with emergencies operators are not trained to handle. But that recommendation has thus far been resisted by the industry, despite the fact that the near meltdown at T.M.I. showed that it can take hours, even days, to find the cause of an accident.

There are other human factors in the safety equation—the operators' almost total dependence on the control panel for information about malfunctions, for example. The bewildering array of thousands of lights and levers virtually defeats crisis management. At T.M.I., some vital displays were located on the back of the panel, out of view of the operators. There seems to be little rhyme or reason to panel design. During an accident involving loss of coolant water, for instance, more than 500 warning lights may flash the first minute, another 800 the next. The Action Plan does little to encourage corrective action.

The plan also postpones requiring utilities to take measures that would prevent interruptions in the flow of coolant water. The emergency cooling systems now in use are supposed to rush water to reactor vessels if the normal cooling systems fail. But steam or hydrogen gas bubbles can form within the pipes of these systems and inside the core itself, making it impossible for coolant water to reach the core in sufficient quantity to stop it from melting. That happened at T.M.I. There have been several gas-bubble incidents at nuclear plants since then, including the January 1982 accident at the Ginna nuclear plant near Rochester, New York.

The investigations of the T.M.I. accident did address the bubble problem. "We believe," the Rogovin report concluded, "that the capability to remotely vent the high points in the [coolant systems] . . . is an important feature that should be provided." In fact, vents that can readily discharge trapped gas are built into the pipes, but they cannot be worked by remote control, and once an accident occurs, no one can enter the containment building to open them. The N.R.C. called on all plants to install remotely operable vents by January 1981, then moved the date to July 1982. The actual deadline remains in doubt. N.R.C. spokesmen have testified in Congress that while the vents are "necessary," the installation schedule is "not feasible."

The shortcomings of the Action Plan are symptomatic of

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the N.R.C.'s regulatory failures in other areas. It has not addressed such issues as the reliability of electrical safety equipment during an emergency; the capacity of the "embrittled" carbon steel walls of many older reactors to withstand the stress of an accident; and the corrosion of the tubing and piping of many plant systems. All of those problems—which were known before the accident at T.M.I. and which are still unresolved—reveal the inadequacy of the nation's present system of nuclear oversight. And the N.R.C.'s lackadaisical attitude toward tightening and expediting safety standards finds favor in the Reagan Administration. White House energy adviser John Marcum says that tube ruptures (the cause of the Ginna accident) and reactor embrittlement "are not N.R.C.'s responsibility. It is the responsibility of the industry. It's an economic issue, not a safety issue."

There is disturbing evidence that speeding up the pace of licensing nuclear plants has become the Administration's number-one priority. "The N.R.C. budget is skewed toward things like safety," says Marcum. "Only a small fraction is carrying out the N.R.C. mission, which is licensing. It's becoming a big R & D bureaucracy." That description of "the N.R.C. mission" is debatable, but Marcum's message is clear: licensing *new* plants comes first; making *existing* plants safe is of secondary importance. "The real problem with the Action Plan implementation," says former N.R.C. Commissioner Bradford, "is Ronald Reagan. In combination with the Bevill Committee in Congress, the Administration has eroded the positive changes in N.R.C. attitudes following T.M.I." (The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, which controls the N.R.C.'s purse strings, is chaired by Tom Bevill and is widely regarded as strongly pro-industry.)

"My intent is to not only sustain but increase this [licensing] momentum," said N.R.C. chairman Nunzio Palladino in an industry speech. "We will increase overtime if needed. We will make whatever use we can of technical assistance from the National Laboratories, and we will continue to explore additional changes to our rules where a significant payoff is evident. For the immediate future there will be no slowing down."

The industry claims that since the accident at T.M.I., the N.R.C. has not acted promptly on license applications, but Bradford calls the charge "utterly bogus." The issue was investigated in 1981 by a House energy subcommittee, which was sharply critical of the N.R.C.'s policy of speeding up licensing at the expense of safety. It concluded "that the NRC and the utilities' commitment to learn from the [T.M.I.] accident has waned as the memory of the accident fades. That tendency has been exacerbated by the excessive and unfounded diversion of NRC attention and energy to the question of licensing delay." The subcommittee noted that it is "ill-timed to devote resources to rushing more plants on line at a time when basic safety programs and the inspection of reactors already operating are not being fully implemented."

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is undoubtedly more attentive to safety concerns than was the rough-and-ready Atomic Energy Commission. As N.R.C. Commissioner Gilinsky puts it, "We are getting closer to the equipment and people we're regulating, and that's good." But the progress that has been made is now coming under great political pressures, with the result that the agency is de-emphasizing safety issues and focusing instead on ways to speed up licensing and minimize the utilities' costs. As licensees come to see that delays will be tolerated, tight schedules for compliance will become meaningless.

That attitude convinced me to resign my job as an N.R.C. project manager in 1976. The government has licensed more than seventy nuclear power plants; each has major safety deficiencies in design and hardware, and each does not have stringent enough personnel qualifications. There have been serious accidents, yet few senior N.R.C. officials even consider forcing the industry to take the steps needed to make plants safe. If there are not enough skilled workers, the answer is *not* to "stretch out" compliance schedules but to close plants or reduce their power levels until all problems are remedied. The N.R.C.'s own regulations indicate that such a course is essential.

And so the agency—with the White House's encouragement—permits the industry to take risks with Americans' health and safety in order to protect the utilities' financial health. When people say, "You can't completely tear down and rebuild a plant," what they're really saying is that it costs too much to do so. But there is a cost in not rebuilding

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the plant—an increased risk to the public. That cost is borne by the people affected because they do not have a voice in the design, construction and operation of nuclear power plants.

As the Reagan Administration seeks more reactors, it is sobering to consider America's twenty-nine-year record with the first generation of nuclear technology. The troubling lesson learned from Three Mile Island and Brown's Ferry is that even near catastrophies have not moved the government to act decisively on behalf of the public's safety and economic well-being. □

HOW TO TELL THE GOOD GUYS

Brainwashing The Peace Corps

DANIEL BARRY

Forty-two Peace Corps volunteers gathered this past February at the agency's Miami base for what could be called an audience preview of a new picture show. The volunteers, whose average age was 27, had survived two months of intensive screening—interviews, medical and legal clearances, skills evaluations—and this was their final briefing stateside before going off to spend the next two and a half years in Guatemala, the Central American country ruled by the "born again" dictator Efraín Ríos Montt.

A discussion leader stepped before the assembled volunteers and explained that the next three hours would be unlike any Peace Corps training they had experienced thus far. "Some of you may feel that any discussion of Communism and the Communist threat is unnecessary and propagandistic," he said. "Others of you may feel that Peace Corps volunteers don't even have to think about it. We do not think so, and neither did the United States Congress, which directed that this training be presented."

When the Peace Corps was conceived in the heat of the 1960 Presidential campaign by John Kennedy, one of its purposes was to counter Soviet influence in underdeveloped nations, which he regarded as most susceptible to Communist propaganda. Warning that hundreds of skilled technicians from Moscow and Beijing were prepared to "spend their lives abroad in the service of world Communism," Kennedy proclaimed that young American men and women, "dedicated to freedom, are fully capable of overcoming the efforts of Mr. Khrushchev's missionaries who are dedicated to undermining that freedom."

In drawing up the law creating the Peace Corps, Congress followed Kennedy's anti-Communist prescription. As Senator Hubert Humphrey put it, "This program is to be part of the total foreign policy of the United States to combat the virus of Communist totalitarianism." One Senator with serious reservations was Iowa's Jack Miller, who feared that young Americans living overseas might be politically raped, and also that Communists might infiltrate the new agency. He introduced an amendment, Section 8(c), to the Peace Corps legislation, which ordered that trainees be instructed in the "philosophy, strategy, tactics, and menace of Communism."

Miller's amendment passed with little debate. In a speech in support of it, Humphrey suggested that its purpose was "to complete the instruction of these people in what one might call a political counteroffensive." The Peace Corps' first director, Sargent Shriver, recalled thinking at the time that the amendment was unnecessary but harmless. "We were going to do that anyway," he said recently.

For the next several years, volunteers attended classes in which instructors assigned readings on Communism, delivered lectures on Marx and Lenin and staged debates on Marxism. After a while, however, less and less attention was paid to Section 8(c). Peace Corps leaders regarded it as dated and ambiguous. In the early 1970s it was completely ignored—"and with good reason," said Richard Sykes, who was deputy director of the Peace Corps during the Carter Administration. "It was absolutely total bullshit."

But two years ago the clause was quietly resurrected, thanks to the persistence of several conservative members of Congress and the efforts of rightist organizations like the Committee of One Hundred to Defund the Left and the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade. This time, instead of relying on lectures and readings, the corps, which is dominated by Reagan appointees, opted for a more modern approach: an audio-visual presentation. After rejecting several early efforts because they were too soft on Communism, Dean Coston Associates, a consulting firm, was hired to produce "Americans Abroad," a $50,000 slide show about Marxism and the Communist threat.

The volunteers in Miami were a test audience for the new production. Their reactions would help Peace Corps officials decide if it should be used to train future volunteers. And so, as a current of nervous anticipation passed through the audience, the lights were dimmed. The presentation consisted of a narration contrasting "open societies" (e.g., the United States) with "closed societies" (e.g., the Soviet Union), accompanied by pictures flashed on the screen. The photographs in the "open societies" segment showed a travelogue America; in the script they were identified as "Person 'Doing His Thing,'" "American Family Worshiping," "Thanksgiving Dinner" and the like. The "closed societies" portion was illustrated by pictures of "Well-Fed Reviewers at Parade," "Two Spy-Looking Blokes Conversing" and a "Glaring Communist."

In matter-of-fact tones, the narrator offered the following nuggets of helpful information:

On open societies: "A secret police force cannot exist, because the system does not tolerate secrets."

On defense spending: "The Soviets have devoted a major part of their national economy to the construction of a vast military machine. We have been forced to respond in kind."

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On U.S.-Soviet relations: "Soviet strategy continues to view the United States as the adversary in the world struggle. . . . Make no mistake: we are engaged in a worldwide struggle for control—an ideological confrontation."

On Vietnam: "We were moved to solve problems which were not of our making, and we inherited both the problems and the blame for causing them."

After the slide show, the group leader threw out questions to provoke a discussion. "How does the existence of totalitarian states threaten democratic societies?" he asked. "Do democratic states pose threats to totalitarian countries?" The audience was then divided into small groups and given role-playing scenarios, in which they applied what they had just learned. In one of the playlets a volunteer is on a bus in a foreign country, and a stranger sitting next to him strikes up a conversation. According to the scenario, "At first he seems friendly and interested in you, but as the conversation continues, he identifies himself as a Marxist development volunteer from Rumania. Since the bus trip has another two hours, you will have to hold up your side of the conversation."

The reaction of the volunteers in Miami to "Americans Abroad" was predominantly negative. Although some claimed it was enlightening, others had serious complaints: It was too simplistic. It addressed only the Soviet form of Communism. It insulted their intelligence. Some even thought it was a kind of loyalty test.

It evoked mixed feelings among agency officials as well. William Dawson, director of the Peace Corps' Office of Training Management and chairman of the Section 8(c) task force, admitted that if the feedback from future test groups is as strongly negative as the response was in Miami, showings of "Americans Abroad" might be canceled.

But for Richard Abell, formerly the director of the Peace Corps' Office of Program Development and now special assistant to the director of the agency, the "very sophisticated set of slides" is on the way to achieving its goals. Tests conducted before and after the screening showed that the volunteers' knowledge of Communism had increased significantly, he said. A study by the show's producers indicated that before the screening, 26 percent of the trainees saw no threat from international Communism to the Western world or to world peace. "I think that says something about the naïveté of the volunteers," Abell said.

Abell and other Reagan appointees to the agency see a definite need for the junior high school level of indoctrination exemplified by "Americans Abroad." They are convinced that Americans are growing up blithely unaware of the horrors of Communism. "For too long," Abell explained, "they have tried to look at it intellectually, from an ivory tower." And so, to bring young intellectuals down from their towers to reality, the agency chose a black-and-white, us-against-them slide show which stimulates as much thought as a Tom Mix western.

As it happens, the anti-Communist presentation also solves a political problem for the corps' director, Loret Miller Ruppe. A Michigan supporter of George Bush when he was running for President, she joined the Administration with a "liberal" tag. Though she has discretionary power to circumvent Section 8(c), Ruppe did not do so—perhaps to ease her conservative critics' qualms.

"Americans Abroad" fits into the Reagan Administration's plans to create for the American public an easily identifiable enemy—the Godless Glaring Communist. To smite that dragon, it wants to send forth a phalanx of young Americans who will explain with flashcard simplicity what's good and what's evil. They will discover that in countries like Guatemala, however, whose President is known to seek divine guidance before ordering more executions, the enemy is not so easily identified. □

NUCLEAR BURYING GROUNDS

Radwaste in the Indians' Backyards

FRED C. SHAPIRO

Sticking it to Indians is a time-honored American custom, and say what you will about the nuclear establishment, it observes American traditions. At least two, and possibly all three, of the spent nuclear fuel repositories that the Department of Energy is thinking about digging would be in the Indians' backyards.

This was made official last month when, under provisions of the radwaste bill shoehorned into Congress' special session in December, the department formally notified six states that they are "candidates" for repository "characterization." The disclosure hardly qualifies as news: for several years, and with considerable publicity, the department has been testing basalt underlying the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington State, welded tuff (a dense igneous rock) at the Nevada Test Site and salt formations in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Utah to see which would provide the best protection against leakage. Thus, in addition to bearing the environmental brunt of mining the uranium in New Mexico and other Western states, the Indians will also be getting the shaft (in both senses of that word) on mined repositories for the spent fuel: the Nevada Test Site is upwind of the Moapa River Indian Reservation; the site on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation is on land to which the Yakimas were promised perpetual access; and both Navajo and Ute reservations will be affected if the salt site winds up in Utah.

The site where testing is furthest along (and which, therefore, is the odds-on favorite to be chosen as the first repository) is Hanford—a 570-square-mile reservation carved out of southeastern Washington's Columbia River Basin in 1943 when the government needed an area in which to produce plutonium for the first atomic bombs. Already more radwastes are buried and stored at Hanford than at

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any other known place, and the General Accounting Office has warned that forty acres of the site are "so grossly contaminated" that they can never be cleaned up.

Thirteen miles west of Hanford lies a 1.3-million-acre reservation that was settled in perpetuity upon the Yakima Tribe by an 1855 treaty after the Indians agreed to give up land that now constitutes more than a quarter of the state of Washington. At tribal offices in Toppenish, Russell Jim, a 47-year-old Yakima who has represented the thirty-seven-member Council of Energy Resource Tribes in Congressional testimony, makes the point that under the 1855 treaty, the 6,700 currently enrolled members of his tribe have perpetual access to the fish of the Columbia and the foods on its banks.

In 1943, when the Manhattan Project swept 1,200 Washingtonians, most of them farmers, from the region in order to build the reactors at Hanford that would fuel the atomic bombs, the Yakima, as patriotic as the next Americans, chose not to make an issue of their treaty rights. It was not until several years ago, in fact, that they learned that isotopes, well within maximum permissible concentrations, of course, but still measurable, were being monitored by Hanford health-physics technicians in four of their sacred foods, fish, deer, elk and berries. It was then that the Indians publicized their concerns about what was going on at the white men's reservation.

"White men look at that place, and they see a wasteland," Jim says. "We look and see chokecherries, rabbits and foods that come out of the ground; but who in their right mind, knowing the contamination they have put there, would go and gather that food now?"

At least that surface and water contamination was principally caused by short-lived isotopes. As a tactical matter, the Yakima chose, as Jim concedes, "to keep the door open to Hanford and to emphasize the point that we are neither pro- nor antinuclear, but pro-safety." However, the repository now being planned will be used for spent fuel, which contains isotopes dangerous for hundreds of thousands of years. This, Jim maintains, "is going to create a perpetuity of its own and abrogate the part of our treaty that grants us perpetual access. A land perpetually contaminated is a hell of a legacy to have to leave to my grandchildren's grandchildren."

The Department of Energy, of course, has assured the Yakima that the burial of glassified and metal-encased wastes from approximately 150,000 spent-fuel assemblies in a 2,000-acre chamber carved out of basalt 3,700 feet below the surface will not contaminate anything. However, the Indians, supported by the Washington Public Interest Research Group, aren't reassured. They argue that the overlying layers of basalt are fractured and that microtremors occur at the proposed repository depth. Furthermore, they ask, is it practical to bury the stuff anywhere within the flood basin carved out by the Columbia?

Ralph Gimera, the Rockwell Corporation's chief engineer on the project, thinks so. The Columbia, he points out, has been tamed by dams (the last flood was in 1948), and as for the microtremors, "I don't know where in the world you wouldn't measure the same kind of seismic activity at that depth, and many places have tremors that are much higher in magnitude." Since June 1980, Gimera and his team of engineers have been testing the resistance of basalt to the heat of spent fuel within tunnels drilled into the side of a Hanford outcropping called Gable Mountain. "As far as we can determine," he says, "the tunnel is essentially stable—we've seen no movement either in the roof or in the sidewalls."

Equally enthusiastic about the project are most of the 34,000 residents of Hanford's company town, Richland, which used to bill itself as "The Town the Atom Built." The people of Richmond derive some 90 percent of their total income directly or indirectly from the $700 million the Federal government spends annually on Hanford projects, and both its labor and political establishments strongly favor everything nuclear. "Waste Could Be $20B Hanford Business" read the headline in Richland's *Tri-City Herald* when testing for the repository project was first announced, in 1979.

"We've always had radwaste, we just haven't had a good system of disposing of it," says Richland Mayor Tom Logston, a 66-year-old retired pipe fitter supervisor on Hanford reactors. And the city's manager, Neal Shulman, points out that the spent-fuel repository proposal has provoked nothing like the protests that forced the State of Washington several years ago to move a chemical waste repository it planned to construct on the reservation near the town eight miles farther away from Richland. "When you talk about nuclear waste around here, people are much less concerned because they know Hanford has a track record in handling it."

Some track record: 26 of the 162 underground steel tanks that store the high-level wastes from reprocessing uranium at Hanford are known to have leaked at least 535,000 gallons of this hot (both thermally and radioactively) effluent, and the integrity of 32 more tanks is rated as "questionable" by the Department of Energy. Also, when there was no storage space in the tanks, 30 million gallons of high-level liquids containing 1.3 million curies of radioactivity were simply pumped into unlined trenches. All this is in addition to 176 *billion* gallons of reactor cooling water and other contaminated liquids that have been pumped into Hanford's ponds over the past forty years. Department of Energy officials concede that this released radioactivity must have already "impacted" the Columbia, but according to Philip Bramson, who heads a team of five reservation monitors, the effect "is immeasurable, even by the sensitive instruments we have."

To the west, the Yakima net ever-decreasing catches of salmon that have made their way up the "impacted" Columbia. They have sent delegations to Congress to warn that "adding contamination to contamination may be a serious error." And in Toppenish, Russell Jim despairs when environmental organizations, most of whose members are white, advocate putting the repository in "already contaminated" Hanford. "How can we live alongside that entity?" he demands. "They say they will draw up evacuation plans in case there's some kind of accident, but where do

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they think we could evacuate to? Across the Cascades to the slopes of Mount St. Helens?" □

'I'm Poor'

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

old Paul demonstrates by taking him out and encouraging him to crawl up his shirt.

Julie, the daughter, has a kitten which is at that rangy stage when the legs look too long for the body. Carla is worried that the kitten may be pregnant, having recently got loose two days in a row. Feeding three children, one kitten and one rat on food stamps and a stringently budgeted salary may be possible, if not highly plausible, but a litter of kittens, or the bill for neutering the cat, would create still another financial crisis in a life peppered with them.

The baby of the family, a blond 3-year-old juggernaut named Nicholas, tugs his one-armed highchair across the kitchen floor to use as a stepladder. In seconds he's up on the counter, reaching for a bottle of soap-bubble liquid.

The family's three chairs are all in the kitchen. This makes an awkward situation on the evening of my visit. As Carla and I attempt to have a conversation, the two older children vie for the remaining seat. Supper, it turns out, hasn't been served. Gradually the reason becomes apparent. There's nothing in the house to eat except a package of frozen waffles. The November food stamps didn't arrive in the mail, although this is the sixth day of the month. Grudgingly the kids settle down to eat what they scornfully label breakfast food. The main course is toasted waffles and tap water. For dessert, some applesauce I brought, along with a batch of homemade cookies. I hadn't thought to pack the pot of soup now simmering on my stove, twenty miles away. Rather, I *had* thought of it, but I hadn't wanted to come on like Lady Bountiful, with all that might imply about Carla's inability to provide for the family she is so fiercely and agilely bringing up alone.

I muse a minute on frozen waffles, something I classify with fast foods in general as tasteless, uneconomical and minimally nutritious. On the other hand, where is the spare half-hour in this mother's hectic schedule to devise the wholesome, upper-middle-class batter with wheat germ stirred in for extra protein?

The terrible irony of holding a household together on little better than the minimum wage is that Carla can never amass any savings to buy items on sale. She can't afford to order a case of frozen orange juice to take advantage of the bulk price. No half a side of beef for the freezer, at a bargain rate. No bargains. The poor are at the mercy of gougers. The only grocery stores that will extend credit until the next paycheck are corner shops that have to charge much more than the chains in order to make a profit. So it's a vicious circle; it's frozen waffles and water for Friday night supper instead of roast chicken and cranberry sauce.

Of course, one reason for Carla's financial problems is that she spends too much on housing. But she is determined to stay on this quiet street. Her apartment in this blue-collar neighborhood is far better than the ramshackle, unheatable place she started out in. There, she had to contend with transients and drifters. Here, people plant petunias in their front yards and obediently put out their trash barrels on pickup days. The district's elementary school is considered one of the best in the city. It's worth the struggle to make ends meet—not that they ever do—to be able to stay here.

Poverty American-style doesn't announce itself in rags and tatters. The first time I met Carla she was wearing a plaid skirt, a white blouse, a tan vest and the comfortable People's Republic of China cotton shoes that have become the preferred footwear of a generation of young American women. The variety of relatively inexpensive, mass-produced ready-to-wear clothes, and the ease with which the middle class discards and replaces its garments, make Outgrown Shops and One-More-Time boutiques meccas for people like Carla Sanderson. Good used items for kids are not so easy to come by. For one thing, outgrown clothing gets handed on, even in affluent families. For another, kids are notoriously hard on their clothes. Nothing about Carla's attire hints that she is below the official poverty level—the single parent of three children, willing to enter into hand-to-hand combat with the bureaucracy to insure them a decent upbringing.

Carla has a secretarial job with a municipal agency in this New England town. Although I call it a town, with its comfortable, three-buckboards-abreast Main Street crisscrossed by seven or eight side streets, and farmland around the edges, it's actually a city. Much of what Carla does from 8:30 to 5 involves meeting the public, providing information about city and state agencies, and channeling complaints and requests to the proper doorway of City Hall. She impressed me that first day as a calm, efficient, attractive daughter of the middle class, a picture hard to reconcile with her impassioned letter to a women's group, printed in a newsletter that had crossed my desk a few weeks earlier.

My own daughter is a single parent in Switzerland, juggling a year-old child and a sensitive job involving political refugees with the exigencies of her private life. Although Swiss social service agencies provide exceptional day care, and her problems are not compounded by financial difficulties, she too suffers from single-parent burnout. She too endures the frequent frustration and often bone-chilling loneliness of the life she has chosen. Through her I've become more aware of the desperate problems confronting young women who are going it alone, particularly those in this country who, like Carla, are under the knife of Reaganomics.

But let Carla tell it: "Have you ever been there?" she demanded in her letter. "Have you ever wondered how many more days you can let your child go to school in stormy

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Maxine Kumin makes poetry of recognizable life: splitting wood in the cold, watching Casablanca, *bumping hips with her daughter when they cook together. She has won a Pulitzer Prize, been a poetry consultant to the Library of Congress, taught at major universities and published four novels, several collections of stories and essays, and many books of poetry. She writes from Warner, New Hampshire.*

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weather with shoes that are torn apart and you simply do not have the money to buy new ones? Have you ever used your food stamp change to buy toilet paper, or get one load of wash done? [Such purchases are illegal under the food stamp program.] Well, I have—and much more.

"Do you know what it's like to face the coming winter months on $700 a month when your apartment rent and utilities total $365, and you have no winter clothing for your children, and they need shoes, never mind boots? And the administration says, 'tighten your belts more, please'—more cuts are coming, probably in food stamps, child nutrition, medical benefits, heating assistance."

Carla has been trapped in one double bind after another. In flight from an alcoholic, abusive spouse in California, she returned to New England with her children a little more than a year ago, when, as she puts it, "I decided it was time to take control of my life again. I sold my possessions, forwarded twenty-seven cartons to relatives, packed two foam mattresses and three children into my station wagon and headed home. I was really feeling adventurous—sort of a reverse pioneer—heading East in *my* wagon. I had never camped out, had never done any long-distance driving. Twelve weary days later we arrived."

Within two weeks she found a job and an apartment, but soon discovered that on a salary of $4.46 an hour she could not quite do it all on her own. Although eligible for day care, she had to choose from a list of sitters approved by the state. But her sitter needed to be paid each week, and the state would not reimburse Carla until after at least three, and possibly as many as twelve, weeks. When Carla remonstrated, she was told, "Maybe you can't *afford* a job right now, honey. Maybe you'll just have to go on welfare."

Nevertheless, she persevered. She found a summer camp program at the Y and a bus service that would take the two older children directly from school to the day-care center once classes began in September. Her precarious schedule worked. She was almost elated at her new-found ability to cope.

Then, on October 1, 1982, the Reagan budget cuts abolished the bus service and eliminated the $60 a month she received through Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Further Reagan pruning decreed that she was no longer eligible for Medicaid because she earned more than $521 per month. That loss was a disaster for Carla. Since she had been hired as a temporary employee, she did not qualify for the medical insurance her employer provided. And with three dependents, coverage was essential. The welfare caseworker was right. She couldn't afford the luxury of a job.

Now that she is a permanent employee, Carla manages without the A.F.D.C. supplement, but she still avails herself of food stamps and day care assistance. Recently she received a 2 percent raise, but since benefits are calculated on the basis of gross earnings, she faces a 5 percent reduction in food stamps—even though her take-home pay will be reduced 4 percent because of mandatory deductions for a retirement program. No redress for this kind of paradox exists in the system.

A statewide food stamp heist, meanwhile, is depriving Carla and all other recipients of two weeks' worth of stamps: the date of issue is being pushed back, three days at a time, from the first of the month to the fifteenth, meaning that each month's allocation must last an extra three days. The stamps are not being prorated, and it appears that everyone is expected to stretch her benefits for the next five months while the Administration makes up for what looks suspiciously like a shortfall in funding for the program. That is hard enough for Carla to do—but what about a family with seven or eight children? What about infants and the elderly? How do you tell *them* not to eat?

"Who has the luxury of intellectualizing about the Reagan Administration?" Carla asks. "When we do stop to think about it, we realize that the government has morally turned its back on single-parenting women and their families; further, it seems to be shoving our problems under the rug because somehow *we're* immoral. We should be home with our families and not out in the working world. The message seems to be that if the programs are taken away, women will have no choice but to 'stay in their place,' even if the place is a violent battleground.

"During a legislative budget hearing, a state representative who is a Reagan enthusiast said in an aside that he had heard that people facing cuts would be forced back onto, or into, the [welfare] system, and he felt that if they wanted to be *spiteful*, let them. Spiteful! Would it be spite to give up a low-paying position with no medical benefits in order to gain Medicaid for a chronically ill baby? If you cannot get children to after-school day care, can you as a mother keep from wondering what's the sense of working in a dead-end job? Is letting a 6-year-old come home from school alone and afraid to an empty house a 'viable alternative'? Our children need and deserve a lot better.

"I'm still from that middle-class upbringing that makes it very hard for me to say that I'm poor," Carla says, as we talk across the battered kitchen table. "To accept the truth, I am *poor*. The last week in August we ate oatmeal three times a day because that's what was left in the cupboard; can you believe that?"

If it hadn't been for the WIC vouchers, there might not have been cereal during that critical period in August between the end of summer camp and the start of Carla's new job. Yet WIC—a food-supplement program for women, infants and children up to age 5 with proven nutritional deficiencies—injects another irony into Carla's life. The program is a direct outgrowth of the Vietnam War. So many recruits were rejected by the armed services because they were physically unfit that a Federal program was devised to improve the diets of nutritionally substandard families. As much as one quarter of the population in the rural South is malnourished; the figure is easily that high in some pockets of chronic, severe unemployment elsewhere.

Although Carla would have to be pregnant to be eligible for the program herself, it provides orange juice, certain cereals and eggs for her youngest child. But the vouchers have only another two months to run, and Nickie, who is the picture of robust good health, will then be deprived of

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these high-protein treats. Carla may reapply for the grant in six months. If Nickie is deemed malnourished at that time, the coupons will be reinstated for another six months. Another paradox in a nation with a mountain of surplus butter slowly going rancid, with warehouses chock-full of dried milk solids and cheese aging to the point of no return.

Still, Carla is quick to point out that she is luckier than most women in her situation. She has some job skills; she has a start on a college education—two years of credits. She has ambitions to complete a degree in human services at a local college. At the moment, this is unthinkable. Even if she received a Pell grant, which is not considered income, she would also need a student loan, which is, and which would put her over the maximum level at which she would qualify for day care and food stamps. Once again, she can't *afford* the luxury, this time the luxury of a loan that would enable her to improve her skills and move up the economic ladder far from these pitiful entitlements.

Entitlements—benefits people qualify for on grounds of age, occupation or income—are not synonymous with welfare, although programs like A.F.D.C., WIC, food stamps and so on fall within the entitlements budget. But only about 17 percent of that budget is spent on so-called "means-tested" allotments—or aid to the poor. The total outlay for A.F.D.C., the program the new conservatives are most likely to attack as subject to the most fraud and abuse, constitutes about one third of the money paid out for civil service pensions. Military retirement pay costs the Federal government 1.3 times as much as its total outlay for the food stamp program. (See James Fallows's November 1982 article in *The Atlantic* for chapter and verse.)

Carla is outraged by the bureaucracy's unwillingness or inability to pursue delinquent fathers. "It is against the law *not* to support your children, but 80 percent of the divorced fathers are breaking the law," she declares. Many men who owe child support claim to be unemployed while holding jobs that pay them under the table. Carla feels that a substantial number of them see this as a kind of vengeance. "But women are somehow made to feel guilty" for the failure of their former husbands to provide even minimal monthly payments.

"I don't know what else will happen this winter," Carla says. "I don't know what else *can* happen. Last year we managed to stay warm, thanks to the Federal heating assistance grant. This year there are going to be more cuts—maybe I won't be eligible. Right now, I don't want to know. It takes all my energy juggling this—" she gestures at the three jack-o'-lanterns she carved out of pumpkins a local farmer gave her for the children the day before Halloween. "I couldn't justify buying them, and he had a field full he said he had no use for."

The sweep of her arm takes in Lester the rat and Nicely the kitten. The gesture encompasses Nickie's day-care finger paintings taped to the refrigerator; the letter Julie received from the United Way thanking her for her $1 contribution, which the child proudly brought out for my inspection; the snapshots of all three children neatly framed and hanging on the wall; the philodendron plants hanging in Carla's bedroom; the surplus Army cots arranged as an L-shaped couch and covered with a floral-patterned spread in the living room.

Carla is hanging on, barely, in a system that is stacked against her. There is little room in her life for recreation or socializing. Weekends are given over to marking time in the laundromat, attending Paul's soccer games, getting everyone off to church and Sunday school.

Would she like to meet a good man, fall in love, remarry? Right now, Carla says, "It's doubtful. I feel that for eight years I stayed in abusive situations out of feelings of powerlessness. I thought I deserved what I got, that I wasn't good enough, that wanting anything for myself was selfish. Now I'm independent; I'm making a life for my kids. So my singlehood—or celibacy, if you want to be accurate—is a trade-off."

She says she is frequently scared, angry and depressed, but she's a scrapper. She will battle the bureaucracy for her missing food stamps, she will wear out shoe leather campaigning for sympathetic candidates for public office. She is articulate, creative and passionately maternal.

"What do I want for my kids? How do you answer *that* in twenty-five words or less! I want them to have a chance, to explore doing the things they're good at—Paul, his flair for acting; Julie, her gymnastics." She pauses, shaking her head. "But those are only the externals. I want them to be kind and aware, to add something to the world as they grow up."

I balance Carla's staunch optimism against the ukases of Reaganomics: less and less for more and more people. As the little they receive is taken from them, it will be harder for Carla's kids to add something. And the more harshly society treats its Carla Sandersons, the deeper each one of us is driven into a spiritual wilderness. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Once Upon a 'Times'...

JENNIFER ALLEN

I SHOULDN'T BE TELLING YOU THIS. *By Mary Breasted. Harper & Row. 361 pp. $15.95.*

The persistent and unacknowledged theme of *I Shouldn't Be Telling You This* is fear. Dressed up as a saucy comedy about 26-year-old Sarah Makepeace's picaresque adventures in the big city, the novel is really about a very young woman who discovers that the world is riddled with corruption and reacts by losing her head. For her debut as a novelist, reporter Mary Breasted has produced a 361-page temper tantrum about having to grow up.

We have many cautionary tales about precocious young people who refuse to grow into moral maturity and turn into monsters—from Balzac's Lucien Chardon to Budd Schulberg's Sammy Glick. But their creators knew what they were doing, and Breasted does not. She apparently thinks she has drawn an appealing, adorable woman, who speaks to us in chatty, confidential pillow talk ("Wait till you hear the rest of this saga!"). We are meant to be Sarah's allies, to trust her. But we do not trust Sarah for a minute. Reading *I Shouldn't Be Telling You This* is like reading articles by Helen Gurley Brown: you cannot believe she really thinks this way; you wish, for her sake, that she hadn't felt compelled to share her thoughts with us.

In part, Breasted intends her novel as a *roman à clef*, a spicy tell-all about the scandalous goings-on at New York City's newspaper of record. The book jacket mimics the *Times* front page, from the typeface to the motto in the corner; *The Newspaper* is New York's "not largest but highest-brow metropolitan daily." Breasted, a Radcliffe graduate, wrote articles on the women's movement for *The Village Voice*, then worked as a reporter for *The New York Times*; Sarah, also a Radcliffe alumna, freelances for a "Greenwich Village weekly" called *The Evil Eye* before getting a job as a *Newspaper* reporter.

But *romans à clef*, no matter how juicy the revelations, have to be clever, and real wit is altogether absent from *I Shouldn't Be Telling You This*. There are some substitutes for it—plenty of sarcasm and smarty-pants hardy-har-hars. The lower-ranked editors at *The Newspaper* are, for example, always called "the idiots," never given names or faces; characters we are meant to think obtuse or vulgar never laugh but go "Ho ho ho!" Ron Millstein, the manic, Machiavellian city editor, speaks fast all the time, often in italics and exclamation points, while the paper's sleepy, windy executive editor says "uh . . . uh . . . uh" a lot. There are flat one-liners ("If Ron Millstein was a genius, what was Shakespeare?"), snippy name-calling (one reporter is "a hokey-looking pipsqueak with a . . . degree in media ecology from City College night school") and attempts at jaunty repartee, but there isn't one truly funny scene in the book.

But Breasted has more in mind here than a *roman à clef*, and those who brave it in spite of the above are left to consider Sarah as a point of interest. In the mid-1970s, when the action takes place, Sarah is writing pieces for *The Eye* and considers herself a "sixties person," though it is not at all clear what she means by this beyond the fact that she lives in the Village ("a sixties place"), likes to smoke dope and speaks in passé slang ("psyche me out," "I was spaced," "I got less negative with myself").

While writing a story on sexism at *The Newspaper* for *The Eye*, Sarah captures Ron Millstein's attention. He hires her on an impulse that remains as confounding to Sarah (who does not know what a lead is and cannot find her way to City Hall on the subway) as it does to us. Straight away, Sarah finds that the paper is not the bastion of right she had always thought it to be. As a result of an error she makes in a story, some city funds are diverted to the Central Park Zoo. Sarah is horrified by her mistake until she is congratulated on it; the zoo, it turns out, is a pet charity of *The Newspaper*'s. This is one of many eye-openers for Sarah. The major plot line involves a campaign by *The Newspaper* to hype a dark horse Presidential candidate; meanwhile, Sarah discovers that some reporters are sloppy with facts, and that the national and city editors will do anything short of shooting each other to get better play on the front page, ignore tips that don't square with their preconceptions and drink too much at lunch.

She learns, in other words, what it is like to work for any large organization, and with each fresh disappointing discovery she shares her girlish, popeyed shock with us: "God, Ron had told another whopper!". "I tell you, I was flabbergasted!" Sarah, however, indulges in more than her share of wormy antics. For example, she takes the *Newspaper* job while on deadline for *The Eye*, which means she never hands in her story. This is a very unprofessional thing to do, as even Sarah must realize, because she bends over backward explaining to us why she wasn't in the wrong. Bulldozed into taking the job by Ron, she was "next to totally unwitting" when interviewed, and "never said the words 'I accept.' " "No one believes me when I tell them," she says, and neither do we.

Incidents like this crop up over and over again, with Sarah behaving cravenly and then bullying and begging the reader for forgiveness. In hiring Sarah, Ron tells *The Newspaper*'s editor many lies about her past, including that she worked on the Harvard *Crimson*. Sarah cannot believe he is telling these lies but says nothing about it because "I was too embarrassed to speak. I mean, think what it would have done to Ron for me to speak up." The excuses sound limp and shrill; special pleading by someone who has painted herself into a corner. Later Sarah decides that Ron's campaign to get his favorite candidate nominated at the Democratic convention by writing flattering stories about him is "on the order of national subversion," and makes several attempts to tell him and her co-workers so before buckling down and helping out. ("I was too tired to argue," she says at one point.) But by the time the first story has been printed, Sarah has peevishly rationalized Ron's maneuver: "Eight thousand other reporters had been in on the act, and we couldn't help it if the delegates didn't know what they wanted."

Even more disturbing, though, is Sarah's talent for simply dismissing from her mind any issue too prickly to

Jennifer Allen writes for New York *and other magazines.*

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think about. Therefore, she sees nothing odd—or wrong—about ignoring the feminist staffers who are seeking a better deal from the paper; when their leader approaches her, Sarah sputters that she wouldn't help their lawsuit because "Ron has given me a lot of breaks, too many" and feels not a tweak of guilt about it. So much for sisterhood: one wonders if Breasted has taken to heart anything of the women's movement. Sarah, as coy, helpless and unenlightened as Richardson's *Clarissa*, isn't post-feminist—she's pre-feminist.

But Sarah isn't a hypocrite. She is genuinely alarmed by her discovery that grown-ups can behave in ratty ways. Underneath all the wisecracking writing you can hear Sarah's—and Breasted's—cry of disbelief and disappointment. Under the delusion that she is constantly struggling against them, Sarah surrenders responsibility to the adults straight from the start. If they don't know right from wrong, she pouts, why should she?

Sarah's only hindsight is that she was in awe of, fascinated by, Ron and by the paper's other sneaky characters: Ron "had such tremendous talent for falsity. What the hell would he do next? . . . I had to *be* there to see!" To Sarah, if you can't worship grown-ups for their goodness, you turn them into glamorous gangsters—that way, you stay a child and they stay larger than life. In one of the last scenes of the book, Ron betrays Sarah and almost costs her her job; Sarah says she didn't call him on it because "to expose him when he lied *against* me would risk ruining his credibility when he lied *for* me." Even a daddy without a shred of loyalty is better than no daddy at all.

I Shouldn't Be Telling You This is as muddled as its heroine. Characters are introduced, then vanish into the vapors; incidents take place that have no consequences or connection to the story. On occasion you can see the heavy hand of the author patching up a first-draft oversight: at one point, the editor asks Sarah into his office for a drink. After their chat, he throws their glasses into the wastepaper basket. "They were plastic," Breasted tacks on helpfully.

But the book's structure only reflects the underlying confusion. Lurking in this story is real anxiety about how one should behave. Why else would Breasted continually, and perversely, put her character in situations to test her

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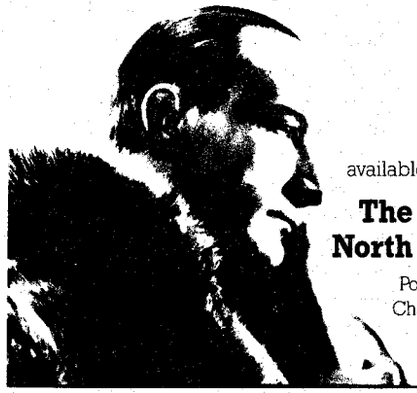

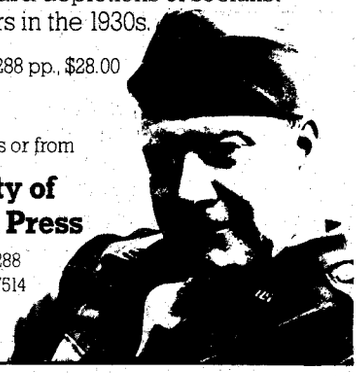

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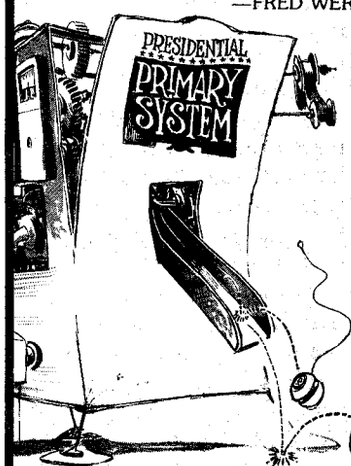

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moral mettle and then make her scramble around for excuses for acting so shabbily? Breasted doesn't know how she feels about the issues she raises. I hope she writes a better book about them when she grows up. □

...And Twice Upon a 'Times'

SEYMOUR KRIM

BYLINES. *By Bernard Weinraub. Doubleday and Co. 590 pp. $17.95.*

When I was a cityside reporter during the last days of *The Herald Tribune*, we used to wonder why our opposite numbers on *The New York Times* cursed with a vengeance that made our ears stand up with respect. Of course we had the champion four-letter heavyweight in the business, Jimmy Breslin, matched only by the novelist James Jones among great American foul mouths of the time. But man for man, the *Times* reporters could wipe us out.

The reason for this obsessive pursuit of the scatalogical soon became clear. We were going down the drain, to be sure, but we were having a hell of a good time doing so—*The Herald Tribune* was wide open to every act of journalistic imagination and inventiveness we could come up with. *The Times*, on the other hand, was a great ecclesiastical body which punished offenders by sending them to cover fires in the Bronx and ripped up reporters' copy if they dared to stick a little vulnerable flesh on the sacred skeleton of fact. No wonder the *Times* cityside crew were fountains of lip-smacking blasphemy: the division between what they were compelled to write and what could not be uttered in print was so enormous that their only compensation was to create an after-hours world in which every verbal perversion ruled, a kind of Black Mass of newspapering.

Bernard Weinraub's first novel comes intact from this underground tradition. A sober, responsible, well-organized reporter for *The Times* these past twenty years—now filing from Washington after stints in New York, New Delhi and other glamour spots—Weinraub was to all appearances the classic drudge so valued by the high priests on West 43rd Street. No style, no personality, no sass; the ideal fact-collecting machine one could trust to meet the antiseptic standard of "All the News That's Fit to Print."

But as you've probably guessed by now, Weinraub has been leading a secret life, and the result is this 200,000-word explosion of cynicism, lurid sex, obscenity, irresponsibility and contempt for ordinary people. As a realistic novel about the newspaper business, *Bylines* is a hoax; but it is a revealing X-ray of the id of a nihilist who for years had to present a clean-shaven psyche to the world.

Bylines is ostensibly the story of who will inherit the managing editor's slot on the traditional, family-owned New York *Star* after the m.e. plunges to a convenient death on the first page. Along the way to answering that burning question, Weinraub presents some fifty newspaper types who lie, cheat, blackmail, truckle and even have a hand in murder in order to dominate the paper. Or, at the very least, beat out the others for a Page One story and a possible . . . Pulitzer! It probably needs no saying that all these TV characters and their simplistic motivations have nothing to do with the real-life world of newspapers. Yet by reducing people to their appetites, Weinraub can slide right into those tasty, gamy areas so dear to the hearts of the old *Times* metro reporters, who in their off-hours preferred a surrealistic sniffing out of the girdle ads to mimicking their paper's high-minded editorials.

For example, the *Star*'s city editor, Barry Cohen, likes to whip his panting mistress until she spurts blood. The black chief of the Washington bureau, Hugh Finch, has ecstatic intercourse with his blond secretary while his black wife goes hungry. The son of "Skipper" Steiner, the publisher, is caught going down on the husband of the national editor, Sally Sims. Sally herself is making it with Skipper, who when he has a free moment discovers he was really fathered by his Uncle Arnold. Lucy Steiner Claiborne, Skipper's sister and widow of the suicided managing editor, is having an affair with sexy Senator Dave Fitzgerald, who has to use his tongue where it counts on Washington hostess Kitty White if he wants her in his corner for his Presidential ambitions. Back at the old city room, deputy managing editor Maury Kramer is de-erected by an almost fatal heart attack while getting it on with delicious foreign desker Nancy Chang. And foreign editor Ward Parsons is himself discreetly banging . . .

If you think Weinraub limits himself to lust, sadism, masochism, impotence, homosexuality, incest, suicide, murder and the rest of what goes on in an average day on a metropolitan newspaper, you underestimate him. That's just the local news. On the international front, Russia and China are about to make war over the ever-handy Mongolian border, but now China has a nuke and worldwide conflagration is at hand. Our President Bergen calls for an emergency meeting of both sides at Camp David. But, as the *Star* learns, Bergen is dying of leukemia, and ex-movie star V.P. Tom Nelson is set to take over. Meanwhile, in a master stroke that saves the rudderless paper from being sold to a secret syndicate headed by Senator Fitzgerald, who wants it to win the White House for himself, *Star* reporters annihilate him by revealing that he accepted bribes from big lobbies, then had his assistant killed. V.P. Nelson's career is also crushed when the paper discovers that he once made porn movies, slept with his illegitimate daughter and fathered her child, and is a pawn of the same Hollywood mogul-murderer who is in league with Fitzgerald to buy the *Star* and pervert the free press. All clear?

You'll be glad to know that Secretary of Defense Belling takes up the reins from the stricken President at Camp David, war is averted, and the *Star* will surely win another . . . Pulitzer! Finally, nice guy foreign editor Ward Parsons, he of the "glittering black eyes, gaunt, bony cheeks and strong mouth," is announced as the new managing editor by a jubilant Skipper Steiner two pages before the end.

What will the uptight *Times* make of this howling piece of yellow journalism (as it were) about the newspaper business by one of its own? Is it conceivable that a shiver of introspection will filter down from publisher "Punch" Sulzberger to executive editor Abe Rosenthal, that they will try to understand why the pure womb of the paper has given birth to such an uncaring parody of all the pieties drilled into its favored drones? Not bloody likely. Ranks will

Seymour Krim's last book of essays was You and Me *(Holt, Rinehart and Winston).*

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close, deaf ears and stiff upper lips will greet any attempt at an honest reappraisal of the paper's inner spirit, and ex-cityside reporter Weinraub will feel justified in having committed every foolish crassness in print he probably always fantasized about.

After all, as one of his *Star* veterans says, "At 38 or 39, reporters get tired. No encores after 40." This nose thumb at reportorial reality is surely Weinraub's way of saying he is ready to take his place in the world of money, power and even cheap status that *The Times* respects far more than it does its clerks of fact. That is what Weinraub learned during his twenty years of hard labor, and it is something. □

Much Bark, Little Bite

RANDALL KENNEDY

THE POLITICS OF LAW: A Progressive Critique. *Edited by David Kairys. Pantheon Books. 321 pp. $22.50. Paper $9.95.*

The Politics of Law features twenty essays by attorneys and law professors of varying shades of left-wing opinion and covers a broad array of topics, including contracts and torts doctrine, labor and antidiscrimination law, legal history and criminology. Animating the collection is an angry conviction that the American legal system helps entrench and rationalize class, racial and sexual domination. Its unifying theme is suggested by its title, for the authors reject the notion that law occupies a realm separate from and above politics. Instead, they argue, legal doctrines and interpretations are inextricably linked to the political views of judges. As editor David Kairys writes, law is "politics by other means."

Leftist scholars and lawyers pursue their careers in a professional culture mostly hostile to them. Thus, the very existence of *The Politics of Law* represents an admirable display of political fortitude on the part of its sponsors—the National Lawyers Guild and the Conference on Critical Legal Studies. But the collection itself is disappointing. There appears to have been no attempt to harmonize the contributors' divergent conceptions of the book's audience; the essays differ wildly in tone and intention. The better ones take little for granted and introduce basic concepts before setting forth their critiques of prevailing ideas. That is the method adopted by Robert W. Gordon in "New Developments in Legal Theory," Mark Kelman in "The Origins of Crime and Criminal Violence," Rand E. Rosenblatt in "Legal Entitlements and Welfare Benefits" and Victor Rabinowitz in "The Radical Tradition in the Law." Less successful are the essays that anticipate an audience familiar with even the most esoteric jargon of scholarly discourse. Edward Greer begins "Antonio Gramsci and 'Legal Hegemony' " by declaring, "Neither instrumentalism nor structuralism is satisfactory as a description of the American political reality or adequate as an explanation of the nature of the legal system." If you don't already know what those "isms" are, you won't understand Greer's essay, for he leaves them largely undefined.

At the other end of the spectrum are essays too general and superficial to be of much use even to casual readers. In "The History of Mainstream Legal Thought," Elizabeth Mensch tries to cover two centuries of Anglo-American jurisprudence in twenty pages (!), and actually claims in a footnote that the scholars she has overlooked do not deserve attention. Justifying her omission of John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin, Mensch writes, "Their contribution has been vastly overrated. Rawls, somewhat whimsically, has simply resurrected seventeenth-century social contract theory in an effort to universalize liberal thought. . . . Dworkin, on the other hand, simply vacillates between an implicit reliance on natural law theory and reliance on the inherent legitimacy of the judicial tradition." Mensch's clumsy attempt to excuse her failure to discuss the two leading contemporary liberal legal philosophers is itself inexcusable. Omission for reasons of space may be a necessary vice, but it shouldn't be elevated to a virtue.

Throughout the collection, assertions are made without facts or citations to support them, as if the writers' words were to be accepted as a matter of comradely faith. In "The Criminal Justice

Randall Kennedy is a freelance writer and a law clerk to a Federal judge in Washington.

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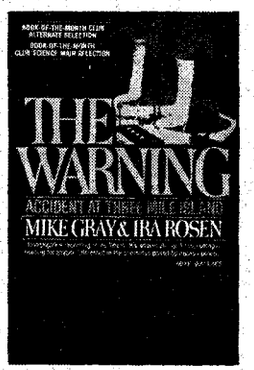

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System and the Role of the Police," David Rudovsky claims that "the police are not subject to meaningful legal restraints," and that while most street criminals are vigorously prosecuted, corporate lawbreakers seldom are. Though vague—Rudovsky never defines "meaningful restraints"—and probably overstated, his point is well taken. But he marshals no hard evidence or clinching arguments; he simply states conclusions. Similarly, in "Law and Race in America," W. Haywood Burns states that "the use of peremptory challenges makes systematic jury exclusion on the basis of race a common courtroom experience," and that "sentencing patterns often reveal sentencing differentials along racial lines." How "common"? How "often"? Detailed studies concerning these issues have been done, yet Burns does not cite them.

The problem is not that the conclusions in *The Politics of Law* are incorrect. Rather, it is that conclusions by themselves are unlikely to persuade anyone not already committed to them. Moreover, the careless attitude toward evidence and the neglect of opposing views that characterize this collection will probably reinforce the prevalent notion that scholarly work by leftists is good only for providing indignation and that "real" scholarship—subtle analysis and basic research—is the province of orthodox, "objective" writers. *The Politics of Law* does not even have an index or a bibliography; those interested in further readings in radical legal analysis will get more useful bibliographical guidance from the footnotes of articles published in those bastions of traditional legal thought, *The Harvard Law Review* and *The Yale Law Journal*.

Lawyers on the left have done much to demystify the hoary slogans that consecrate the law as it is, and have led the struggle to conceive of law as it should be. One thinks, for example, of work by Thomas I. Emerson and Arthur Kinoy, or, among younger writers, by Richard L. Abel and Mark Tushnet. Sadly, *The Politics of Law* adds little to the tradition of dissident scholarship. □

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How We Died

NELL IRVIN PAINTER

TERMINAL VISIONS: The Literature of Last Things. *By W. Warren Wagar. Indiana University Press. 288 pp. $24.50.*

A HISTORY OF THE END OF THE WORLD. *By Yuri Rubinsky and Ian Wiseman. William Morrow & Company/Quill. 192 pp. $13. Paper $6.*

The 1970s brought the idea of Armageddon back into fashion, as the Vietnam War, the energy crises, Iran's repudiation of progress Western-style, and the Ayatollah's minions kicking our people around shook our serene certainty that America was number one. Public figures, notoriously ignorant of history, began to moan that Americans were now doubting themselves for the first time ever. Actually, this was merely the first big doubting since World War II: there were abundant doubts during the 1930s, of course.

All the same, with the Reagan Administration evidently spoiling for "limited" nuclear war, the end of the world as we know it seems very near at hand. It's consoling, in a perverse way, to be reminded that we are not the first human beings to feel confronted by doomsday. As these two books remind us, the idea of the end of the world has a long history.

W. Warren Wagar's *Terminal Visions: The Literature of Last Things* is a serious study of eschatological fiction, drawing on some 300 books in English and French. Although Wagar glances at non-Western and biblical works, he is most interested in books published since Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826). More particularly, he concentrates on what he calls "speculative literature," which most of us know as science fiction.

Wagar sees a fundamental shift around 1914 in the fictional causes of the end of the world. Before the Great War, God, nature and the cosmos bring the world to an end. But after the war, people themselves were increasingly seen as agents of destruction. Twentieth-century fiction of the apocalypse is a literature of wars, revolutions and, as the century grows older, scientific miscalculation, with environmental catastrophe coming in as a motif after about 1965.

Clearly and confidently written, *Terminal Visions* is the work of a mature scholar. For Wagar, books on the end of the world function to warn society that it is going off in the wrong direction. World endings, therefore, are heralds of renewal as well as warnings of doom. Nowadays, he writes, our civilization is falling apart, destroying itself from within with the "chaos of Coca-Cola, fundamentalist Islam, suburban shopping malls, starving East Africans, Eurocommunism, and H-bombs crouching in their silos. . . ." Realizing that present-day fears of the end of the world are merely part of a long tradition, Wagar musters a wan hope that something better is on the way for mankind.

For all its insight, this book is oddly bleak and dull, as though the writing were an exercise through which the author avoids saying directly what is on his mind. A difference of taste also dampened my enthusiasm, since much of the book is an analysis of science fiction, notably that of the great British writer J. G. Ballard, and I am not a lover of science fiction.

The touch of weariness in this book is

Nell Irvin Painter is completing a book titled Standing at Armageddon: The United States 1886-1919. *She teaches history at the University of North Carolina.*

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partially explained in Wagar's "Personal Preface." In the early 1970s, that time of turmoil, Wagar, nearing 40, experienced personal and career crises. Teetering on the brink of middle age, he found that his academic world had turned sour, in precisely what way he does not say. He concluded that he lived in "a credicidal civilization." I take this phrase to mean a society in which nothing is sacred, which is just what some of us liked about that time. Wagar nourished his distress and buried himself in science fiction. A decade later, he has produced something of a terminal vision of his own.

A History of the End of the World, by Yuri Rubinsky and Ian Wiseman, is completely different. My soft-cover copy looks like a fat comic book. Rubinsky and Wiseman are journalists, and their book is profusely and irreverently illustrated right down to the table of contents, and it is peppered with one-liners. Despite its gloomy subject, this immensely entertaining encyclopedia of ends is anything but portentous.

I fell into step with Rubinsky and Wiseman immediately. "History," they say in what they call their invocation, "is the joint creation of people angry, courageous, determined, dreaming, foolish, funny, hearing voices, impractical, in mobs, insecure, inspired, jealous, lazy, lustful, powerful, seeing visions, self-righteous, strong, stubborn, stupid, tired, zealous, right or wrong . . . [they are] makers of history just as we are—are more like us than unlike." The chapters are arranged in a straightforward, chronological manner, with two thirds of this sprightly book given over to ends of the world from the pre-science-fiction era. The Garden of Eden, Gilgamesh, the Flood, the endless ends of the Hindus, Daniel's apocalypse, the Black Death and Nostradamus's prophecies are a few of the subjects presented in a page or two. The discussion of Amerindian end-of-the-world myths is particularly intriguing—for with the coming of white settlers the Amerindian world really *did* come to an end. By the time we get to J. G. Ballard, the idea of the end of the world has lost its sting. The book ends with an "extroduction" titled "Everyone Has Always Said: This Time It Could Really Happen," which suggests that, for the authors, our present fears are no more definitive than those of our forebears.

Two Poems

SELF

In the depth and rustle of midnight how do you know
What is the dream and who the dreamer? Oh, yes,
You fell asleep to the star-bit and murmurous flow
Of the stream beneath your window, but frontierless
Are the stream and Self conjunct all night long.
How is the difference divided between singer and song?

Can it be you that flows from distance, to distance
With the tune of time and blood intertwined forever?
Or does the dark stream of log-ripple and stond-chance
Define the pattern of your whole life's endeavor?
What elements, shadowy, in that dream interlace
In a region past categories of Time and Space?

Yes, think of the pale transparencies that lave
Stone, riffle, algae, and the moon-bright sandbar,
While music seems to drift from a shadowy cave
Of consciousness you inhabit, whoever you now are—
But dawn breaks soon, and that self will have fled away.
Will a more strange one yet inhabit the precinct of day?

BREAKING THE CODE

The world around us speaks in code,
Or maybe something like the old Indian sign
Language of the Great Plains—all with a load
Of joy and/or despair. And in all of which you must resign
Yourself to error or ambiguity. The road
Markers are often missing, or defaced. Is
The message the veery tries at dusk to communicate benign?
Is the owl's old question—"Who-who"—
Addressed to your conscience, and you?
Does the first flake of snow from a sky yet blue
Mean *that* or *this*?

In dawn light does the scroll-mark of wind-swirl in night snow,
Or later the bleeding icicle tip from the eaves,
Tell you a truth you yearn to know—
Or is it merely an index of the planet's tilt?
And what of the beech's last, high leaves
Of hammered gold, or glint of sunlit gilt?

What do the eyes of a mother, dying, say or perceive
As your heart compresses in the torturing twist
Of a fist,
And do you not know
Whether you feel a ghastly relief—or grieve—
As with glazed eyes you go
Forth, alone, under winter stars, and try to weep,
And try again, and yet again,
For only the undefined tears will serve such paradox of pain.
Later, of course, you sleep.
Oh, for the longest sleep!

But, no, for later you may see a beloved face
Wreathed in raw rage,
And see timeless beauty clawed, in a flickering moment, by age.

It is hard to break the code in our little time and space.

Robert Penn Warren

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Yet for all the upbeat tempo of their chronicle, Rubinsky and Wiseman join Wagar in second thoughts about the fire this time. They recognize that nuclear war really could annihilate civilization, and they speak of several other ways we might do ourselves in: chemical and biological warfare, pesticides, radioactive wastes, fluorocarbons, even computers. This razzmatazz discussion of the idea of the end of the world ends on an ambivalent note that is even less optimistic than that of the world-weary academic, who at least sees in the end of his world the promise of something better the next time around. □

DANCE.

MINDY ALOFF

New York City

One mystery of the theater: Even when they're moving in unison, four dancers will be perceived as individuals. A second mystery: Five dancers will be read as a crowd, unless they're intimately grouped—a duet plus a trio, a soloist plus a quartet. A third mystery: In a line of dancers, the one farthest upstage will seem to wield the most power. A fourth: Dancers who are visually connected produce images as powerful as if people were actually touching, but an audience is made anxious by the prospect that what it sees may not be "true."

Mysteries of the theater are mysteries of perception. No choreographer now working for the stage understands them better than Merce Cunningham, or uses them more subtly to project emotion from dance action. In part, this results from Cunningham's refined sense of place. Watching his dances in a conventional theater, one soon becomes sensitive to the way the proscenium arch seems to edit the movement, isolating it for contemplation. The choreography plays to this fixed boundary the way images in a Godard movie allude to the camera's eye.

During the past decade, Cunningham has, in fact, been deeply involved with moving pictures. In the 1970s, he began to collaborate with filmmaker Charles Atlas on dances for the camera, often reorganizing the same material for presentation on stage. The process has led to some absorbing films and at least two theatrical wonders—the stage versions of "Channels/Inserts" and "Locale." During the Merce Cunningham Dance Company's two-week season at City Center in March, one observed in the most recent works an increased sharpness of scene and depth of field. It's tempting to ascribe those qualities to the discipline required to invent dance images for the screen, but whatever the source, the result is choreography of formal vigor and sensual beauty.

Of the two new offerings, one, "Coast Zone," was derived from a Cunningham/Atlas film (still being edited). The other, "Quartet," was made directly for the theater. Both works steadily contrast images of four dancers with five; in that, they are related like opposite sides of the same door. But in atmosphere, they're related like night and day. "Quartet," the lunar piece, is imprisoned in its frame. "Coast Zone," amicable and undramatic, breaks free.

"Quartet" gives five dancers the tragic weight of twelve, a jury for the end of time. "Coast Zone," more magical, gives a cast of twelve the weight of five. The air around them lightens to ozone. The tempo is sprightly, the psychological temperature is mild and the phrases seem to be etched on water. Toward the end, quartets that compose and recompose themselves around the wings in a kind of metaphysical square dancing leave an especially delicate impression. Both Mark Lancaster's lighting, which seems to go from dawn to dusk and suddenly back to dawn, and Larry Austin's accompanying sound, a score called "Beachcombers" which features hissing steam and a voice that seems to have been dredged through a swamp, refer one to the natural world. At moments, the entire cast is dispersed into the wings, like drops of water sent flying by a pebble. They return in large and open configurations, without the suggestion of fraternal bonding that often gives Cunningham's choreography a storytelling quality. In "Coast Zone," one dancer plus one dancer does not equal a duet.

Duets form the basis of drama, and it is drama that makes a dance widely accessible. In "Quartet," every encounter is fraught with potential significance; the piece was the hit of the Cunningham season. Despite the title, it is actually a piece for five: Cunningham and a relatively small, light-boned quartet of younger dancers, three of them women. From the beginning, the choreographer's presence sets up a standard of equivalencies. Here it takes four dancers to balance his actions; here it takes one dancer performing something extreme. Cunningham's dancing these days is little more than a stiff-soled walk, a hop as dry as a winter cough and a repertory of elaborate arm gestures. However, he has a magnetic personal force; like Picasso's Minotaur, he automatically becomes the point of reference whenever he appears.

Other modern-dance choreographers have been thrown into relief as their companies age backward around them, but only Cunningham has successfully converted this discrepancy into material. And what darkly humorous material it is. In "Quartet," there's a moment when he crouches like a hound in the path of Helen Barrow as she unfurls her leg into an audacious *devéloppé à la seconde*; her high is his low. The scene might have been a night thought of James Thurber. At the end, as if delivered of a burden, the choreographer walks off into the wings, leaving a dancer in each corner of the stage, like milk bottles on neighborhood stoops, amid the dying clangs of David Tudor's doleful "Sextet for Seven," and Mark Lancaster's burnished gloom. It could be the eve of the earth's destruction, or 5 A.M. any morning in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

In the exquisite Lila Acheson Wallace Auditorium of Japan House during March, members of the Bunraku Puppet Theatre of Japan gave a bravura demonstration of their art, and it was thrilling to observe how much a puppet can tell us about human dancing. With their small heads, high waists and long limbs, the puppets enjoy Balanchinian proportions, but the most interesting thing for a dancegoer is to see what wood cannot do. The challenge for the puppeteers, who work the four-foot dolls in full view of the audience, is to create gravity for their charges. They achieve this through a curious identification of their own locomotion and foot-stamping with the puppets' midair retreats and advances. As the Heron Maiden glides forward, elevated by three men in black, one "sees" her treading a surface because one connects her upper body with her operators' lower backs and braced thighs. We ob-

Mindy Aloff's column on dance will appear monthly in The Nation.

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served as if through a magnifying glass, how dancing begins and ends as a shift of weight, how it is the art of taking steps. The hardest point for the puppets to realize is where the human dancer begins: with the feet securely on the ground. □

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

Porgy and Bess
'night, Mother

It's clearly a misnomer to call the current production of *Porgy and Bess* a "revival," even though it hasn't been performed all that often since it opened in 1935, and then almost always in doctored, sometimes butchered versions. We don't speak of reviving operas that have always been in the repertory, and *Porgy* is an opera, not a musical—possibly our finest (Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*, that exceedingly different sort of work, is its chief rival.)

Classification aside, *Porgy* is a welcome presence in this empty season. If DuBose Heyward's libretto is sentimental and melodramatic, how many opera libretti aren't? If it sometimes depends more on bustling spectacle than on keen psychological insight, that too is an operatic tradition. What matters is that the George Gershwin score is superlative and that the lyrics by Heyward and Ira Gershwin retain their wonderful freshness and bite.

This production has its origin in the 1976 *Porgy* of the Houston Grand Opera Company, which was the first rendering that did anything like justice to the scale on which the work was originally conceived. A number of people involved in the Houston *Porgy*—producer, director, costume and lighting designers—have had a hand in this one, and they have certainly gone all out. The cast numbers some eighty or ninety (such are the vocal demands that there are four singers alternating in the major roles of Porgy, Bess and Serena, and two taking turns at Clara, Jake, Maria and Crown). The sets for Catfish Row and Kittiwah Island are lavish without being overblown; the costumes are shrewdly "authentic."

There's one problem with the production, however. Radio City Music Hall is a gigantic place whose acoustics have

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never been the best, and even sitting in the orchestra quite near the stage, I had trouble hearing. It doesn't much matter during the big familiar numbers—"Summertime," "Bess, You Is My Woman Now," "I Got Plenty O' Nuttin' "—but it's quite annoying during the quieter scenes. Perhaps that's why the program contains a lengthy synopsis of the action. On reflection, I can recommend *Porgy and Bess* only to people with superior hearing and those who know the opera intimately.

The hyperbole machine is operating on Broadway again. Upon a modest two-character play with nothing flagrantly wrong with it—but not much to get excited about either—the reviewers have lavished nearly their whole stock of ecstatic adjectives, to which encomiums a Pulitzer Prize has just been added. Even before Marsha Norman's *'night, Mother* reached New York City, Robert Brustein likened it to *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. (That Brustein's American Repertory Theater had given the play its premiere, in Boston, might have had something to do with that wild comparison.) Well, O'Neill's best play and Norman's do have something in common: they both bring us unpleasant news about the family.

The play takes place one evening in a house "way out on a country road" in the South. A middle-aged woman and her thirtyish daughter live here. The mother is silly, self-indulgent and totally reliant on her daughter in practical matters; the daughter is heavyset, slow-moving and morose. Early in the evening she informs her mother that she is going to kill herself that night. "I'm tired," she says. "I'm hurt. I'm sad. I feel used." From then on the play details the mother's frantic efforts to dissuade her daughter and the young woman's stolid insistence on carrying out her plan.

The mother makes absurd suggestions: the daughter could take up crocheting; they could get a dog, rearrange the furniture. The younger woman grimly makes her preparations, showing her mother where things are in the kitchen, telling her how to pay the bills and so on. As the mother begins to grasp her daughter's seriousness, her arguments become the "reasonable" ones any civilized person would make, but the daughter beats them back, saying she wants to turn life off "like the radio when there's nothing on I want to listen to."

Up to this point the play is moderately interesting as a moral inquiry (do we have the right to kill ourselves?) and moderately effective as a tale of suspense. But then the women begin to talk about the past, the daughter's childhood in particular, and what emerges is commonplace and predictable. I don't mean their lives are commonplace and predictable—that's a given—but dramatically the play falls into domestic cliché. The mother confesses that she and her husband, the girl's father, had no love for each other and, in response to the daughter's lament, says, "How could I know you were so alone?"

Next we learn that the daughter suffers from epilepsy. She says it's in remission and isn't the reason she's killing herself, but the fact of the illness, and especially the fact that the mother for a long time hid the truth about it from her, enters our consciousness as a diminution of mystery. So too does the daughter's admission that her own husband left her partly because she refused to stop smoking.

The effect of these revelations is that the suicide becomes explicable on the one hand—epileptics, neglected children and abandoned wives have a hard time "coping"—and ludicrous on the other—if nicotine is more important than marriage, what can you expect? The play might have had a richness, a fertile strangeness of moral and philosophical substance, had the suicide been undertaken as a more or less free act; had Norman not offered as the executor of this fascinating, dreadful decision a character with so many troubles. When the shot sounded (from behind a bedroom door) I wasn't startled, dismayed or much moved; it was all *sort of* sad, *sort of* lugubrious.

Norman writes cleanly, with wry humor and no bathos. Kathy Bates as the daughter and Anne Pitoniak as the mother give finely shaded performances. But the only way I can account for the acclaim *'night, Mother*'s been getting, besides the hunger for "important," "affecting" dramas that gnaws at our educated theatergoers, is that this domestic tragedy doesn't succumb to the occupational disease of its genre: an "uplifting" or at least a consoling denouement. But what a negative virtue that is, and what a comment on our impoverished theater! Yes, the play's *honest*, yes it's sincere; but have we reached the point where we find such minimal virtues something to rave about? □

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L	■	N	■	Q	■	A	■	B	■	S	■	P	■	A
L	A	C	Q	U	E	R	■	O	N	W	A	R	D	S
S	■	I	■	A	■	T	■	U	■	I	■	I	■	Y
■	W	E	L	L	T	H	A	T	■	M	A	G	I	C
D	■	N	■	■	■	W	■	■	■	M	■	H	■	H
R	I	T	E	S	■	O	R	C	H	E	S	T	R	A
D	■	■	■	A	■	R	■	A	■	R	■	■	■	I
P	O	L	I	C	E	M	A	N	■	S	T	A	I	R
A	■	O	■	K	■	■	■	A	■	■	■	T	■	S
N	A	D	I	R	■	E	N	D	S	W	E	L	L	■
C	■	G	■	A	■	X	■	I	■	A	■	U	■	D
H	A	I	R	C	U	T	■	A	D	D	E	N	D	A
D	■	N	■	E	■	O	■	N	■	E	■	C	■	M
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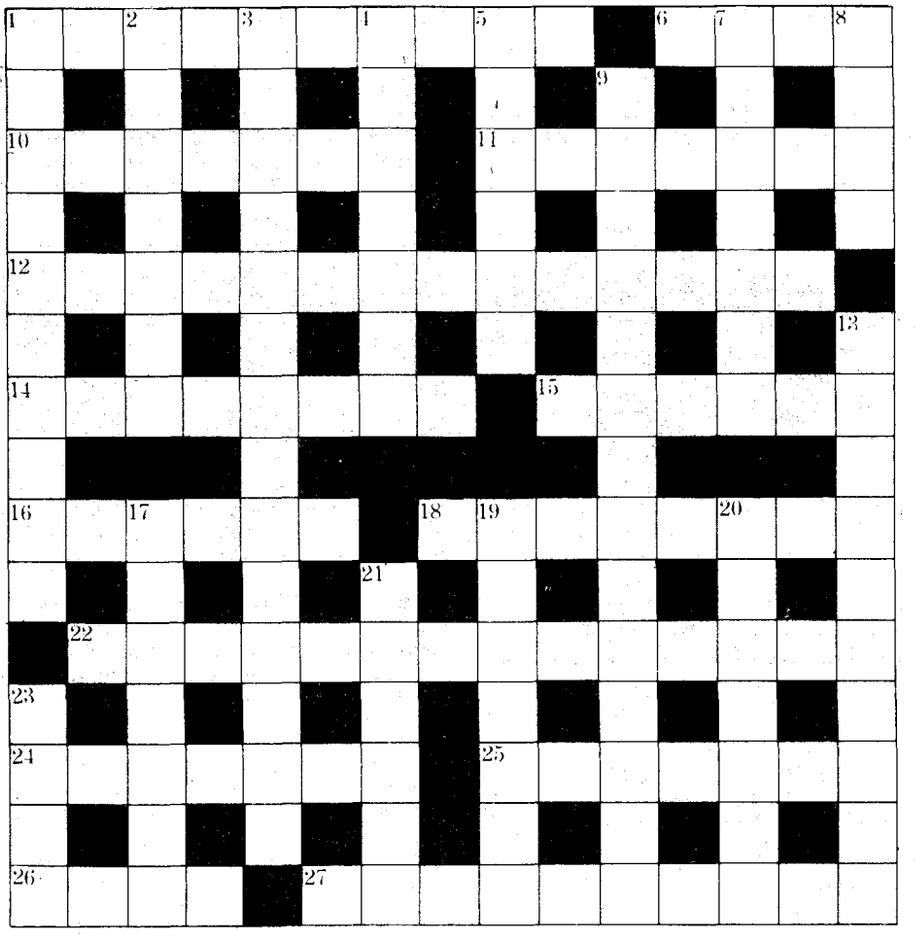
Crossword Puzzle No. 1961

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Giving added saliency by indicating the noonday sun? (8,2)
6 See 18
10 Show some surprise about the small type? Show what happened again! (7)
11 Take out the Women's Movement inside? Sure, you take such things out! (7)
12 Very warm, as well as the two sort of Bambi types very disturbed. (3,3,8)
14 A horse might be with a little bit when the enthusiasts returned and then ran away. (8)
15 Being acclimated, keys might be this open. (4,2)
16 Repeat the sound again, in three choruses. (6)
18 and 6 What meaning has a temporal subject? (It's not a remark of the patient.) (3,5,4)
22 Did Zola's famous letter use this grammatically? (Some consider it rather objective.) (10,4)
24 That's the long and the short of it, when it comes to poetry. (7)
25 Leg around .03937 inches, one in a little animal? (7)
26 See 23 down
27 A common man following study can, to be dependent on something not yet certain. (10)

DOWN

1 Do they buy most of what a cat does with horses, for example? (10)
2 A damaged tire in a state of inactivity. (7)
3 On the track of an idea, probably. (5,2,7)
4 Why the diners had to hold their plates on their laps? (This is important!) (7)
5 Make current, being both due and apt, possibly. (6)
7 One doesn't go out of the family to do so, but it sounds like a fashionable kind of dog. (7)
8 Cyclops was one, as you might have seen. (4)
9 You might find this smart Senate led by one but certainly not a freshman Congressman (5,9)
13 We no longer field this number of stars, it plying a number of thieves on a rowing cre (5-5)
17 If you do, you shut up—or put somethin a letter! (7)
19 The sort of riot allowed in verse form.
20 Like SiO_2 with some water—one pail sibly. (7)
21 Look at what you might be unable to s goose—it might have an extensive pr (6)
23 and 26 across A man's chin might be short part oozed a little. (8)

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